

QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE

# Watch-house Review



## Acknowledgement of Country

To the Traditional Custodians of Queensland's precious land and waters. We pay our respects to Elders past, present, and emerging. We acknowledge your unique history and cultural heritage. We seek to embrace and promote its richness through the delivery of culturally appropriate services to First Nations people and communities.



## General acknowledgements

The QPS Watch-house Review team acknowledges all individuals and agencies who gave their time to provide a submission, complete a survey, engage in a consultation meeting and/or assist with the provision of information. Your inputs are greatly valued and appreciated. Statistics alone do not provide a complete picture, and these collective insights have added depth and breadth in the identification of the key issues and creation of an evidence-based path for reform.

We acknowledge the numerous staff working in watch-houses every hour of the day, every day of the year, who are doing the best they can, often 'making do' in circumstances that are extremely difficult. Ageing infrastructure and increasing demand (including to assist other criminal justice agencies), continues to place extraordinary pressure on the QPS workforce. This workforce is supplemented by our frontline responders who are taken off the road to perform watch-house duties, prisoner transports and hospital guard duties; who are then not available to respond to calls for service and perform frontline policing that the community expects.

Against the backdrop of heightened external scrutiny, this Review provides the QPS with a timely opportunity to look at what we are doing, ask 'why', and ultimately reset and realign. Our Review is comprehensive, yet we acknowledge that all the answers are not presently available, and more work needs to be done, particularly in collaboration with other government agencies, to determine what an effective end-to-end state custodial system looks like, and to map out how we get there.

The internal and independent Review team comprises of strategic policy, research, intelligence, policing, and legal professionals.

# Foreword

*Conducting this Review has been a valuable and timely opportunity for our organisation to examine watch-house Places, Processes and People with the aim of enhancing custodial functions. The Review and its recommendations outline a clear course of action to address the key concerns and drive meaningful change that effectively resets, corrects, and delivers improvements across our watch-house network.*

Past reviews and coronial inquest recommendations have called out numerous issues with police watch-houses. While the Queensland Police Service (QPS) has made some progress in addressing these, delivery has in many cases been slow and disjointed. When examining the nature of these past reports, it is very clear that the expectations placed on our workforce and our organisation are significant and constantly increasing. Many of these issues are extraordinarily difficult to address. Our review reflects on these challenges, as well as surfacing other concerns that also require our focus.

Unlike many prior reviews, our watch-house review has harnessed the experiences and knowledge of our workforce and conducted deep dives on our data to identify the most substantial and salient pain points and concerns.

Additionally, the review has drawn on evidence and insights from other jurisdictions to inform our recommendations. We have also listened to the community and stakeholders through the public submissions process. We are confident that our approach has robustly surfaced key issues, and our recommendations provide a balanced and workable path forward to drive crucial reform and transformational change for QPS watch-house functions.

While many of our recommendations represent major change, we have tempered some to propose incremental reforms including the establishment of

cross-command multi-disciplinary working groups, leveraging inter-agency partnerships to co-design and deliver consistent services, and trialling new ways of working prior to large-scale implementation, for example workforce models, recruitment and training.

My observation through the review is that our officers do a professional job under challenging circumstances in the majority of instances. It is a credit to our workforce for their daily efforts.

In terms of next steps, many recommendations can be implemented by leveraging existing resources across the QPS, whilst other recommendations require our organisation to work closely with our criminal justice partner agencies to drive the broader custodial system reform agenda.

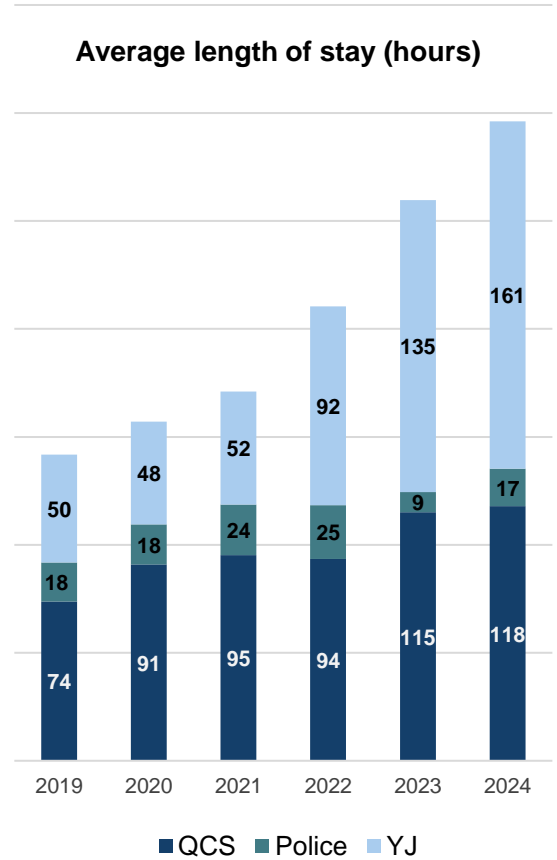
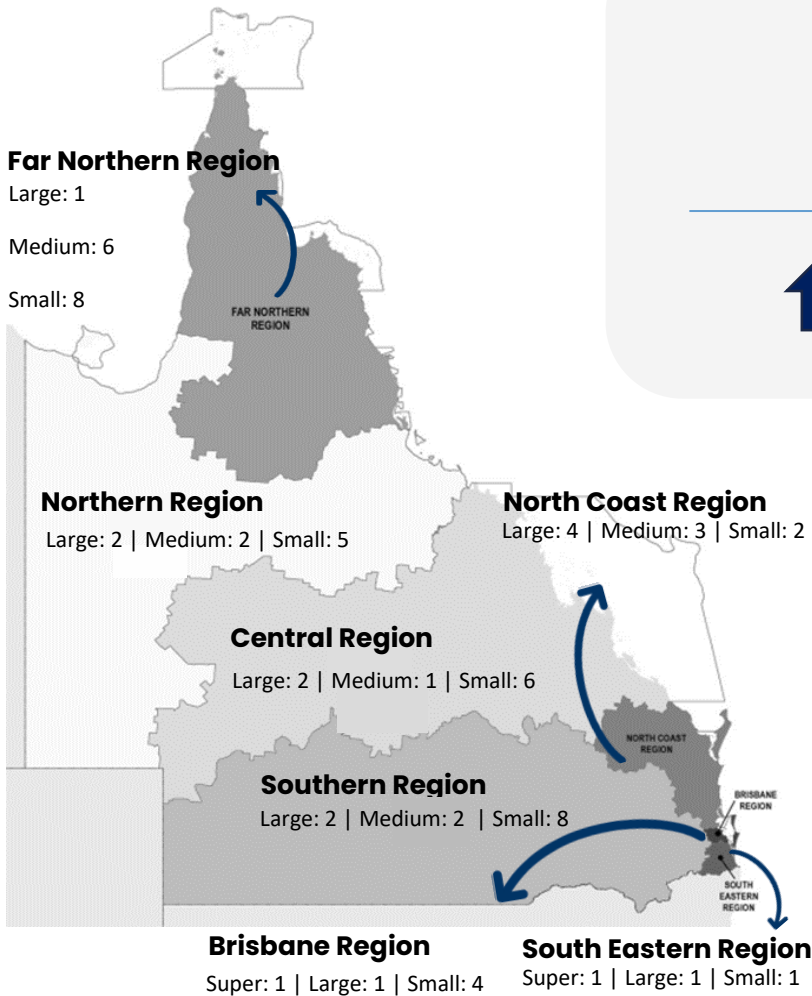
To effectively address these complex and multifaceted watch-house challenges, it is imperative to adopt a whole-of-government approach. In turn, I have moved to establish a Deputy Director-General Group focused on system issues, such as data collection, transport, court attendance and movement of prisoners from watch-houses.



**Cameron Harsley APM**  
**Deputy Commissioner**  
**Regional Services**  
**July 2025**



# At a glance



*“The costs to fix an environment like a watch-house is so significant that it is simply outside District funding capability...*

*... it is simply too difficult and expensive to repair and fix most aspects i.e. cell doors, padded cells, corners etc.”*

*“It should be a state approach with watch-houses managed by a central body, with a regular maintenance schedule strictly adhered to a continuous improvement approach”*

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# Background

In Queensland, watch-houses are intended to be used as a short-term, temporary holding facility for people who have been arrested and are being processed, are awaiting transfer to a youth detention centre or corrective services facility or for their first court appearance. They are operated by the Queensland Police Service (QPS) and are usually attached to a police station or courthouse.

The QPS has received ongoing criticism from oversight agencies and advocacy groups which have led to previous reviews undertaken by the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC), Queensland Ombudsman, QPS Human Rights and Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture (OPCAT) Watch-house Audit 2019, and various coronial inquests stemming from reportable deaths in custody. Key recommendations from these reviews have highlighted concerns around inadequate admissions processes, lack of privacy for people in custody, unsuitable infrastructure (particularly for children) as well as the need for better coordination among criminal justice agencies involved in managing prisoners which has direct impacts on persons held in police watch-houses. A timeline of significant reviews making specific recommendations about watch-houses is included within **Annexure 1**.

While the summary of previous recommendations is not exhaustive, these reports collectively underscore the necessity for facility improvements, enhanced governance, and prisoner care in watch-houses. Despite some reforms being introduced and implemented by the QPS, the ongoing oversight and implementation of key recommendations by the QPS has been inconsistent and disparate.

In August 2024, the Commissioner of Police announced the Watch-house Review (the Review) into how the QPS designs, provisions, and operates watch-houses to ensure they are safe and well-managed for staff, visitors and people in custody. Priority will be given to those areas that will achieve the best outcome for watch-house personnel and people in custody by ensuring the custodial activities are managed appropriately. The Terms of Reference sets out the scope of the Review (refer to **Annexure 2**) which provides guidance on matters to be considered under three main themes: **People**, **Processes** and **Places**.

Much of the Review found a need for capital investment into watch-house facilities. However, the use of watch-houses in line with their original purpose (short-term processing) would alleviate the need for significant further investment.

The Review used a mixed methods approach to rapidly gather diverse documents, perspectives, and administrative data, resulting in a thorough, data-driven, and comprehensive body of evidence. Over a period of six weeks (15 November 2024 to 31 January 2025) data was collected from three main groups: consultations and inspections, submissions and surveys; documents and legislation; and administrative data. Information gathered during this collection phase involved both quantitative and qualitative analysis techniques, including an inductive and deductive thematic analysis, with inter-coder reliability incorporated.

It should also be noted that the majority of the Watch-house Review team are employees of the QPS and an external legal professional was also engaged to provide an independent and critical perspective to the inter-coder reliability process. Overall, the inter-coder reliability method was deemed effective, with multiple analysts establishing consistent coding and themes.

Throughout this document, the term 'prisoner' refers to people in police custody and may also refer to people in police custody who are deemed a prisoner of Queensland Corrective Services (QCS) or Department of Youth Justice and Victim Support (DYJVS).

# Operating environment

The QPS operates 63 watch-houses of varying sizes across Queensland, with a total of 891 beds and 555 cells, as at November 2024. Watch-houses are for the temporary holding of prisoners. Generally, they are not designed or resourced to hold prisoners beyond 72 hours.

Of the 63 watch-houses, 22 watch-houses are resourced to operate 24 hours, 7 days per week. The remaining watch-houses are located in remote or regional areas of the state and are not resourced to operate 24/7. This results in varying capacity distribution across the network depending on the time and day. Therefore, the overall bed capacity does not accurately represent the true capacity, as it is dependent upon the operational status of watch-houses at any given time.

## Legislative and policy context

The longstanding QPS position has been that prisoners are to be held in police custody for the minimum length of time necessary.

Section 6 of the *Corrective Services Act 2006* enables adult prisoners sentenced to a period of imprisonment to be detained in watch-houses for 21 days or until the person can be conveniently taken to a corrective services facility.

In August 2023, amendments were made to the *Youth Justice Act 1992* to confirm the practice of holding children in watch-houses until beds become available in youth detention centres and ensuring the process is more transparent. The amendments also provide a human rights override declaration that applies to this decision making process until 31 December 2026.

Section 56 of the *Youth Justice Act 1992* requires the QPS to transfer children in watch-houses to a detention centre as soon as reasonably practicable, once notified of bed availability. There are further provisions under section 56A that enable the temporary transfer of children in police custody to a detention centre for the purpose of participating in activities, programs or services, where a bed has not yet been allocated to the child at a detention centre.

Police officers and watch-house officers have a duty of care to all prisoners to ensure they are treated with dignity and are provided the necessities of life which is recognised in both criminal and civil law.<sup>1</sup>

Police and watch-house officers have additional responsibilities for the management of children in

custody. Where all other options have been exhausted and a child must be held in police custody, the child should be held in a facility suitable for the child and held for the least possible time. The child must also be segregated from adult prisoners and provided with materials for age appropriate activities if detained for more than four hours. Officers should also permit family members, legal representatives or other appropriate adults to visit the child daily to support the wellbeing and morale of the child.

## Custodial management

The policing districts are responsible for the management of watch-houses within their control. This means each district oversees the operation of watch-houses including staffing and facility maintenance.

In 2020, the QPS established the State Custody Unit (SCU), within the Road Policing and Regional Support Command, to provide strategic oversight and guidance for custodial operations in Queensland. Although SCU does not directly oversee watch-houses, the unit works with policing districts to influence custodial policy, uplift capability and resolve systemic challenges.

## Demand

In 2024, the QPS processed a total of 78,108 admissions through watch-houses, of which approximately 10% (7,432) were children. The total admissions for adult and children has increased by 6% since 2021. Of the total admissions, 21% (16,947) were for periods more than 72 hours.

Due to growth in prisoner numbers since 2012, Queensland's correctional facilities have been overcrowded since at least 2014–15.<sup>2</sup> Queensland Corrective Services (QCS) have indicated the main factors contributing to the growth in prison populations include increased reported and cleared property offences, increased sentences of imprisonment by the courts, decreased grants of parole and an increase in prisoners returning to prison, due to parole breaches.

## Prisoner Transport

The QPS undertakes substantial prisoner transportation duties, including those on behalf of other agencies (QCS and DYJVS). These duties drain workforce capacity and places significant additional pressure for frontline police resources, which directly impacts the ability for frontline

resources to be responsive to calls for service. The additional transporting of prisoners creates risk and security issues in its operation.

Prisoner transport is becoming a critical issue when considered in the context of transporting prisoners to manage watch-house demands. This is a direct result of the extended lengths of stay that arise from the inability to transfer prisoners to an appropriate corrective services or youth detention facility. This creates movement of prisoners within the Queensland watch-house network to manage demand, overcrowding and segregation requirements.

## Legislative changes impacting bail laws

Over the last several years Queensland has enacted several legislative amendments that have significantly impacted bail laws, particularly concerning youth offenders. Reforms introduced<sup>3</sup> in 2020 clarified the effect of the bail decision-making process to ensure that consideration of risks and any mitigating conditions occurs prior to a decision to release a child and mandating that children posing an unacceptable risk must not be granted bail.

In 2021, further amendments strengthened the youth justice bail framework<sup>4</sup> by creating a limited presumption against bail, requiring certain children charged with 'prescribed indictable offences' to 'show cause' why bail should be granted. The amendments clarified the considerations to be taken into account by decision-makers, such as whether the child has a lack of accommodation and/or family support, when determining whether to grant bail. Amendments also provided a legislative framework to trial the use of electronic monitoring as a condition of court ordered bail for 16 and 17 year olds who have committed a prescribed indictable offence (and have been previously found guilty of one or more indicatable offences). These measures targeted serious recidivist youth offenders and aimed to strengthen the youth justice bail framework.

In 2023 amendments via the *Strengthening Community Safety Act 2023* further tightened the youth justice bail framework to:

- introduce the offence of breach of bail as a criminal offence for children;
- extend the trial of electronic monitoring as a condition of bail for a further two years and to include eligible 15 year olds; and

- remove the requirements for police to consider alternatives to arrest if they reasonably suspect a child on bail (for a prescribed indictable offence or certain domestic violence offences) has contravened or is contravening a bail condition.

The bail framework seeks to uphold community safety by making sure that those who pose the highest risk to the community remain in custody. These policy changes that affect the ability to grant bail or extend functions delivered within the watch-house setting, collectively contribute to the ability to manage demands in watch-houses.

## Length of stay

A significant factor impacting watch-house capacity across the state is increasing prisoner length of stay. Holding prisoners in the watch-house after they have been remanded or sentenced was identified by the Review as a major logistical challenge for the QPS and correspondingly represents a sizable opportunity for reform.

The Review found that longer prisoner stays in watch-houses can lead to increased rates of non-compliance by prisoners and increase in self-harm events.<sup>5</sup> These issues are reflected in the findings of several published reviews, coronial findings, and in recommendations which continue to highlight the long-standing and critical issues affecting Queensland watch-houses, and the significant implications associated with both increasing prisoner volume and length of stay. Watch-houses are simply not environments that are designed for lengthy prisoner stays, and there are serious implications and risks associated with this fact being routinely overlooked.

In 2024, prisoners spent, on average, less than 24 hours in a watch-house, awaiting their first court hearing (see Figure 1). These persons are referred to as QPS prisoners.

Where a court decides not to grant a person bail and they are remanded, or sentences a person to a period of imprisonment, the person returns to custody.

In 2024, adult prisoners spent, on average, 118 hours in watch-houses after they were remanded or sentenced. These persons are referred to as QCS prisoners. Children remanded or sentenced were more likely to spend longer in a watch-house, averaging 161 hours. These children are referred to

as DYJVS prisoners (see Figure 1). It is not uncommon for some stays to significantly exceed this average, for example over 14 days.

The Review found that in 2024 prisoners being processed for bail or awaiting their first court hearing spent, on average, less than 24 hours in watch-houses. These prisoners accounted for 75% (58,233) of people processed through the watch-house. Of the remaining 25% (19,875) of prisoners processed and who were remanded or sentenced, adults spent on average 118 hours in watch-houses and children spent, on average, 161 hours in a watch-houses (see Figure 2).

In some cases, the days extended beyond 21 days for both adults and children.

Length of stay remains a significant issue in Queensland, particularly for vulnerable groups, including women, girls, and children. Past reviews and recommendations assert that watch-houses are not suitable places for vulnerable groups.<sup>6</sup> Figure 3 illustrates an increase in the length of stays between 2021 and 2024 for women, girls, and children in custody.

Unlike QCS and the DYJVS, the QPS has no other agency or avenue to rely upon when watch-houses are at capacity. There is significant organisational responsibility to consistently manage prisoners that would ordinarily be the responsibility of QCS or DYJVS.

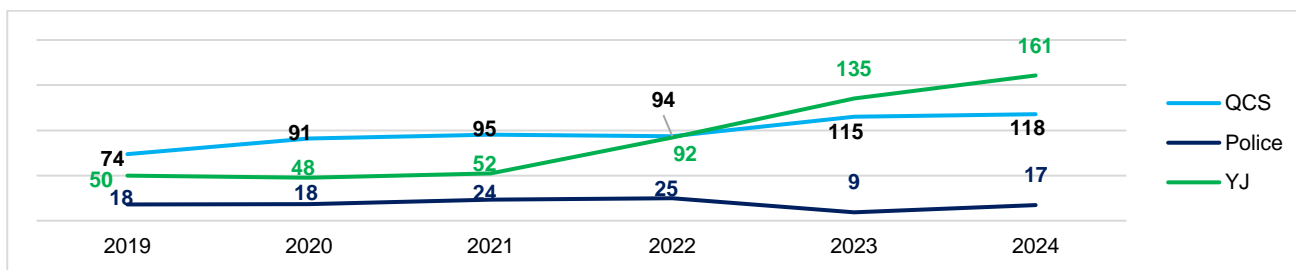


Figure 1: Average length of stay (hours) in watch-houses for QCS and DYJVS prisoners (remanded or sentenced) compared to police prisoners, by year, 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2024.

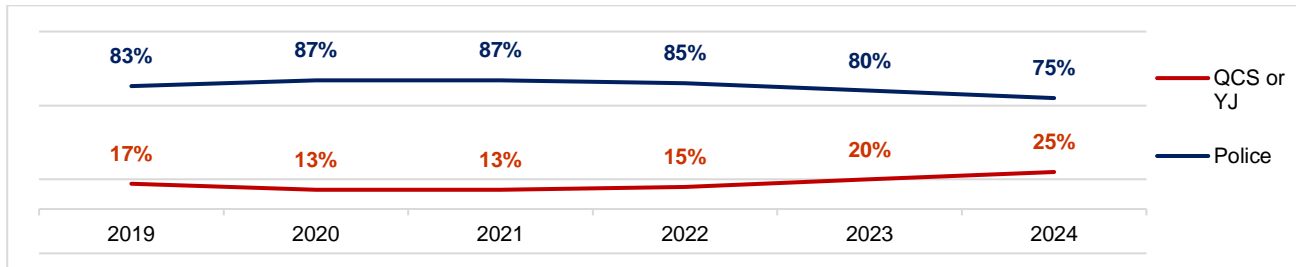


Figure 2: Proportion of QCS or DYJVS prisoners (remanded or sentenced) in watch-houses compared to police prisoners, by year, 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2024.

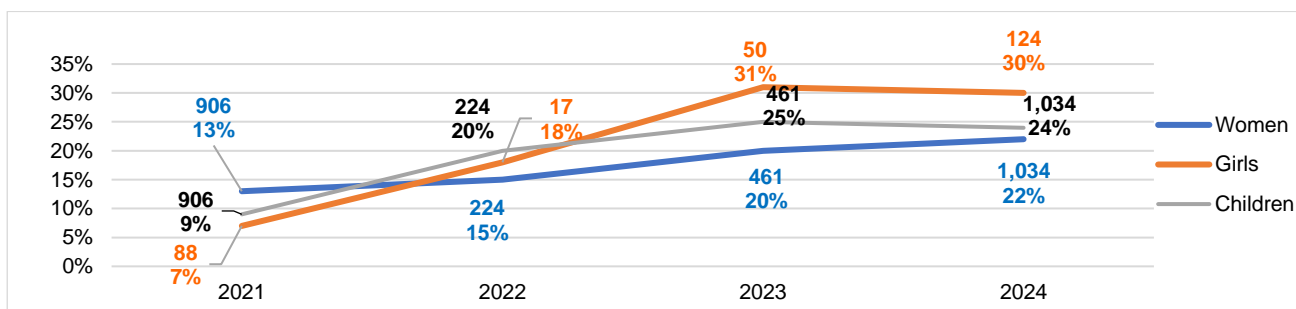


Figure 3: This percentage shows the number of prisoners held for more than 72 hours between 2021 and 2024, categorised by women, girls and children.

# Review findings

Outcomes of the Review are broken down into six key themes concentrating on internal QPS operations to inform reforms and improve watch-house functions for staff and prisoners. Within the Review findings it is also acknowledged there are interdependencies between other government departments, as the increasing length of time prisoners are held in police watch-houses places further demands on the watch-house network.

## Watch-house infrastructure

Statewide, the QPS operates 63 watch-houses. Thirty-eight of these are located adjacent to police stations, 15 are standalone buildings while the remaining 10 are attached to court houses. Watch-houses are categorised as 'super', 'large', 'medium' and 'small' based on their maximum capacity and the layout of a watch-house depends on the age or size of the facility.

Chapter 16 of the QPS Operational Procedures Manual (OPM) defines a watch-house as 'a facility designed to hold persons overnight or for 24 hours or longer'. Generally, police stations also provide facilities known as 'holding cells' which are intended to hold prisoners in custody for short periods pending release, for example, awaiting release on bail, to enable a notice to appear to be issued, a person who is under arrest for an offence and requires breath analysis, or awaiting transfer to a watch-house. Holding cells, while not classified as a watch-house, have similar requirements for monitoring persons held in the custody of the QPS.

A watch-house has between one and 51 cells, most with two beds in each cell. Most watch-houses have larger cells that prisoners may access at certain times. Generally, a watch-house will also have at least one violent detention cell and an interview room.

As many watch-house facilities are built underneath courthouses or adjacent to police stations, retrofitting or extending the internal spaces is either structurally unfeasible and/or cost prohibitive. The coupling of watch-houses within or connected to courts imposes additional challenges and dependencies with the Department of Justice (DOJ). Contributing to the inability to extend or modify, a watch-house is often limited to its geographical location being within a city or on land parcels not much bigger than the total building footprint. Due to the aging watch-house infrastructure and outdated design, many facilities do not enable prisoners to have access to fresh air, natural light, exercise yards, or adequate privacy.

## Admissions process and searches

The existing intake and assessments process of people into a watch-house involves several pat-down searches, and unclothed searches where necessary, before being held temporarily in a holding cell by the arresting officer. The admission and processing of a prisoner into the watch-house can take several hours. Larger watch-houses across the state can admit and process up to 40 people a day.

During the admission process, prisoners are asked identifying information, spoken to about the reason for their detention or arrest, asked personal health questions and have their property logged for safe keeping. A large number of watch-house staff are also often present in and around the counter. The absence of privacy for the prisoner to answer questions necessary for their admission is of concern, and the Review was told it is likely impacting the truthfulness of answers provided given the lack of privacy. The current designs and general lack of space in watch-houses does not offer any alternatives to this practice and has been recognised as inadequate, with cultural issues, such as *gratuitous concurrence* (a communication style, common amongst First Nations peoples, whereby a person appears to agree with everything said to them, even where they do not agree or do not understand the question. This can manifest as saying "yes" to all questions asked<sup>7</sup>), not properly recognised in the questions asked or in the responses received.

Assessments for all people entering a watch-house (including vulnerable groups) are currently conducted through a single set of questions that do not differentiate across age groups or acknowledge the unique needs of individuals. While initial intake questions are necessary for watch-house officers to triage and prioritise prisoners, comprehensive assessments for general health and mental health should be conducted by trained health professionals. These assessments should address risk, health conditions or concerns, medication needs, and support requirements, and should align with questions asked in QCS and DYJVS facilities.

Issues with searching prisoners particularly women, girls, and children, has also been highlighted. Chapter 16.10 of the OPM, outlines the QPS policy regarding searches in watch-houses, including legislative authority to remove clothing only when necessary and with safeguards to minimise impact and trauma. All people entering watch-house custody are required to be 'pat down' searched as a minimum. Additional searches, such as unclothed searches or by use of a handheld scanner, are conducted if risk and reasonable suspicion is determined. While the purpose of the search is to mitigate risk, practices can still be intrusive and undignified, especially for women and girls.

Despite the searches conducted, the Review found that secreted contraband can remain undetected. One watch-house provided data on seized contraband in a calendar year. Seized items included 52 syringes or needles, three knives or blades and various drugs. The Review was also advised of an incident in February 2025, where two QPS officers sustained injuries after being stabbed with a needle by a prisoner who was being escorted for a shower.

To mitigate the need for personal searches within the watch-house and improve detection of contraband, the Review recommends a trial of a body scanner at the entry point of a watch-house in one facility, as has been implemented at the Wacol Youth Remand Centre which is currently operated by the DYJVS.

## **Watch-house design**

Ageing or small facilities may use a linear layout, where there is a straight line of cells from a single point. Modern or larger facilities may use a pod layout that has one or more console areas overlooking multiple cells. Older facilities commonly do not provide adequate cell capacity, safety, fresh air, natural light or fit-for-purpose exercise yards for prisoners. Outdated watch-house designs provide limited privacy for prisoners when showering and using the toilet. The need to supervise prisoners and eliminate ligature points has resulted in showers and toilet design offering minimal privacy, especially in shared cells where prisoners can easily observe each other using the toilet. The Review found that while watch-houses should have shower facilities, not all do. Many shower facilities within watch-houses are narrow with a step or raised shower pan, meaning they are not accessible for prisoners with disability, mobility impaired or are injured.

The Review heard that potential ligature points, which increase suicide risk, such as protruding shower heads and other outdated fixtures, cannot be modified without compromising other building structures and possibly creating other ligature points. Where remediation is possible, temporary closure of watch-house areas is often necessary, which further affects capacity for the duration of the works. In some locations, closure to conduct works is not possible due to the lack of other watch-house options nearby and hence issues are not addressed.

While some watch-houses in the state have exercise yards, they are, in many cases, impacted by environmental elements of their geographical location including high temperatures, harsh sun and rain. For those watch-houses that do have functioning exercise yards, overcrowding, understaffing and segregation requirements means it is difficult to allocate time for each prisoner or group of segregated prisoners, particularly when there are not enough staff to facilitate these movements. Several watch-house officers in charge (OICs) told the Review that limited access to exercise yards can have a negative impact on prisoner behaviour, especially children. Without access to exercise and fresh air, incidents such as assaults on staff and other prisoners, excessive noise, and cell damage are reportedly more likely to occur.

### **Cell doors**

Some ageing watch-houses do not have modern, electronically controlled cell and internal doors. Key operated doors take additional time to unlock which the Review found can delay the provision of assistance to a prisoner by watch-house staff.

Of particular concern to the Review are cell doors that do not have a hatch as they pose a safety risk to QPS staff. The hatches are used to provide prisoners with food, medication and other necessities; they are also used to safely remove and apply handcuffs. Doors without hatches have a gap underneath which is used to slide food and other items across the floor to prisoners. While this practice minimises the number of times cell doors need to be manually opened, the design creates significant issues for staff who need to constantly bend down. Sliding food along the floor also creates more spills into the corridors and necessitates extra cleaning to minimise slipping hazards. Additional staff are required to apply and remove handcuffs when no hatch is available to ensure officer safety from both the prisoner and other prisoners in the cell.

## **Segregation and privacy**

Chapter 16.12.1 of the OPM outlines the requirement for the segregation of females and males, and children from adults in watch-houses. While separation is prioritised, the layout and infrastructure of many watch-houses make it challenging to comply with this requirement. This results in inappropriate exposure of female prisoners to male prisoners and girls to adult prisoners or boys, including in some locations, showers or toilets, where there are no privacy screens or doors.<sup>8</sup>

Where segregation requirements cannot be met, it is common for the QPS to transfer prisoners to another watch-house where they can be appropriately segregated. This places significant demands on both watch-house staff and frontline police to facilitate the transfer, as well as impacting the wellbeing of the prisoner who may be isolated from their community due to their relocation.

## **Lighting and temperature control**

To enable watch-house staff to undertake cell inspections, particularly overnight, the internal lights within watch-houses are generally kept on constantly. In some watch-houses, these lights can be dimmed overnight, however, most remain on at full brightness. This can impact the wellbeing of prisoners, particularly their quality of sleep, and increases the risk of poor prisoner behaviour.

The Review also found many watch-houses have poor temperature control and ventilation. Some watch-house cells have no windows or access to fresh air, while other watch-houses are open air, leaving them subject to the weather, including high temperatures, as well as rodent and insect infestations.

*“My current watch-house has fluorescent lights on 24/7 which means that prisoners have no sense of time...they have trouble sleeping etc...”*

*“The conditions in the watch-house are at such a poor standard that prisoners deliberately injure themselves to get transferred to hospital for treatment.”*

## **Cleanliness**

Prisoner behaviour such as urinating on walls, the presence of blood, bodily fluids and faeces in cells creates serious biohazards to staff and other prisoners. Coupled with food scraps, plumbing blockages, and overcrowding, maintaining cleanliness to an acceptable hygienic standard is challenging when cells remain continuously occupied.

Providing adequate cleaning of watch-house cells is challenging due to the high volume of prisoners housed combined with the ability to contract cleaning services in certain areas due to a lack of professional cleaning services available. The Review was told that in some locations, cleaning is subcontracted to police social clubs and performed by off duty police officers with no expertise or training.

To ensure consistent cleaning standards are utilised in watch-houses, the Review recommends the coordination of cleaning contracts across Queensland form part of a holistic review of watch-house building standards.

## **Closed circuit television (CCTV) systems**

CCTV surveillance is critical for monitoring prisoners in cells, coordinating responses to incidents, improving staff safety as well as to enable the detection and prevention of problematic behaviours. However, CCTV is a significant financial investment for watch-houses. All key areas of watch-houses, including cells, are covered by CCTV, with monitors located in the officers' area. In watch-houses with pods or wings, these areas must be continuously supervised by a watch-house officer. In watch-houses with a linear layout, prisoners must be monitored constantly by a watch-house officer who has no additional duties. To ensure privacy for prisoners, some watch-houses implement privacy squares on CCTV systems to block out footage of a prisoner using the toilet, and there is usually no CCTV coverage of shower areas.

Many submitters to the Review identified CCTV systems are ineffective or in poor condition. Constant monitoring requirements via CCTV in watch-houses has led to compliance issues. Some facilities lack the necessary space to accommodate CCTV monitors, leading to situations where the monitors are located inside the police station instead of the watch-house building due to physical space constraints. Access from

the CCTV monitoring station to the watch-house or cells is through several locked doors, causing delays in responding to prisoner incidents.

*“The facility was built [well over 30 years ago]. The CCTV is in poor condition and is so old that it cannot be correctly repaired. 2 cameras don't work, and the system does not record. This has been reported numerous times but every (sic) just ignores it, or pretends it is a problem they cannot fix.”*

Smaller regional watch-houses are infrequently equipped with the staff or technology to monitor prisoners effectively, necessitating higher staffing requirements to provide adequate monitoring when prisoners are held within that facility. Economies of scale are difficult to achieve in smaller watch-houses, hence, the Review recommends the development of a watch-house infrastructure improvement plan which considers the appropriateness of existing CCTV systems. When surveyed, District Officers stated the use of effective technology could minimise the handling of prisoners by staff.

On 2 August 2024, the Deputy Chief Executive, Strategy and Corporate Services approved amendments to the QPS Digital Electronic Recording of Interviews and Evidence Manual to allow Assistant Watch-house Officers (AWOs) to use body-worn cameras (BWC). The amendment also instructs staff to wear and use BWCs when checking on and interacting with prisoners.

## **Maintenance and repairs**

Districts are financially responsible for capital works and maintenance of watch-house infrastructure. The Review found that districts are not allocated a specific budget to address maintenance, leaving some watch-houses in a state of disrepair. Watch-house OICs indicated their perception is that funding for frontline service delivery and other district functions is prioritised over watch-house repairs and maintenance.

*“It appears bare minimum is done for watch-house (CCTV compliance etc, mould removal, nil infrastructure). Currently \$200,000 of remedial works outstanding.”*

Many watch-houses in Queensland have far exceeded their useful operational life, with limited capital investment available to upgrade these facilities in accordance with growing demand and other requirements. Due to the level of degradation in many existing facilities, major upgrades are needed, and in some cases, upgrades are not feasible or are cost prohibitive. Due to excessive use of watch-houses and the extended periods of time prisoners are being held, the facilities have deteriorated.

Deliberate damage caused in watch-houses can also be attributed to prisoner overcrowding. The Review was told that overcrowding increases deliberate damage to watch-houses such as damaging cell windows and doors, by scratching or other means. This damage can significantly compromise the ability of staff to monitor a cell, requiring additional cell inspections and may create additional safety risks for prisoners who may experience an adverse health event that cannot be immediately identified.

Survey respondents indicated concerns about delayed maintenance to, for example ligature points, to mitigate significant prisoner safety risks. Of note, the QPS has already commenced a body of work to address issues that can impact the safety of prisoners, such as ligature points.

The QPS utilises the QBuild Maintenance Response Centre (QBuild MRC) to carry out maintenance in watch-houses. QBuild MRC staff determine the priority of works depending on the level of threat to staff and prisoners, with this then determining the allocated response time for repairs. Watch-house OICs are advised to contact the QBuild MRC and log a job for urgent works that must be addressed immediately. For immediate priorities, expenditures under \$1,000 do not require prior approval before being rectified. However, for non-urgent requests, an email must be sent to QBuild MRC, who will respond within 14 days. The Review found that many cases of repairs and maintenance are not being approved due to the substantial expenditure required for works. Another factor impacting the timeliness of repairs and maintenance is delivery time for parts from manufacturers and suppliers, some of which are located overseas. The Review was told that in one instance, critical replacement parts to render a cell operational took several months to arrive.

The Review was also told that there is a high level of variability of the quality of the repairs undertaken, with follow-up work often required, which further delays the use of cells or other damaged areas of watch-houses.

*“Watch-house staff report having little or no practical support from the organisation, such as urgency for building maintenance and repairs, replacement of critical PPE etc.”*

Cumulative deterioration and deliberate damage compound the inability for maintenance tradespeople to access cells and other prisoner areas to undertake repairs while the facilities are continuously at, or over, capacity. OICs reported 12-month delays for repairs and maintenance which consequently prevents the use of the affected areas, including cells and exercise yards, which then reduces capacity. A backlog of maintenance issues statewide has resulted in a consistent number of unusable cells and beds across the network. For example, on one day in early 2024, six cells and 13 beds in one large watch-house were unavailable due to delayed maintenance.

For some watch-house facilities, the type and quality of upgrades is limited by the existing infrastructure. In some older facilities, the existing layout is unable to be changed to include modern fittings, upgraded electrical capabilities or in some circumstances, address potential ligature points due to the way in which the facility was constructed. If watch-houses were used for their original purpose, that is short-term processing, this would likely mitigate the frequency of upgrades required.

## **Additional functions provided within watch-houses**

The structural limitations of watch-houses combined with the expanding complexities in providing additional services to afford prisoners access to the necessities such as health services, privacy during legal consultations, education and visitations, limits the availability of dedicated spaces to provide functions such as fitting and removal of electronic monitoring devices and VideoLink services for court.

### ***Electronic monitoring***

For eligible adult offenders, and some children, electronic monitoring is available as a condition of bail. Watch-house staff are responsible for the fitting and removal of electronic monitoring devices (EMD) to these persons upon their release from the watch-house. The Review found that across the watch-house network, there are limited purpose-built or allocated areas for the fitting or removal of EMDs and a lack of storage facilities.

### ***VideoLink services***

Partitioned rooms are frequently used to facilitate VideoLink court appearances and access to legal representatives, with limited other appropriate space for the provision of support services or to allow visitors. On several inspections, the Review team observed official visitors sitting outside cells or crouching down to speak with prisoners through mesh grills.

## **Deficiencies in undertaking audits and inspections**

The Review found there are no standard inspection or auditing procedures within watch-houses. One watch-house OIC told the Review that QBuild conducts annual inspections, however, the findings of the inspections are rarely acted upon.

The Review recommends the introduction of a centralised inspection and auditing process that covers the design, standards, and operation of watch-houses. It is intended for this to assist in prioritising work, allocating funding and engaging contractors, to maintain the safety and security of watch-houses.

## **Recommendations relating to infrastructure**



PLACE

### **Recommendation 1**

### **Business case for capital works for watch-house facilities**

The QPS develop business cases for watch-house options including capital works.



PLACE

### **Recommendation 2**

### **Reclassification of watch-houses**

The QPS reclassify current watch-houses, based on facility purpose, locality, structure and operational capabilities. Categorisation is to be informed by workplace health and safety (WHS) assessments and relative controls that can be implemented to reduce overall risk.

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PLACE

### **Recommendation 3 Watch-house remediation plan**

The QPS immediately commence a program of watch-house remediation works to address identified safety issues and privacy concerns (particularly for women and girls), as funding permits.



PLACE

### **Recommendation 4 Body scanner trial**

The QPS implement a body scanner trial in a large/super watch-house to enhance the safety of staff and prisoners and reduce the need for invasive unclothed searches. An outcome evaluation should be conducted following the trial to consider the potential for further implementation.



PLACE

### **Recommendation 5 Watch-house infrastructure improvement plan**

The QPS update the Building Standards Manual (BSM) to reflect minimum standards for watch-houses, including the reclassification of some watch-houses. Ensure standards reflect findings from Coroners, Ombudsman, Human Rights, and WHS assessment recommendations and undertake inspections to ascertain level of alignment of standards in facilities. Use inspection findings to develop a forward capital assets plan for QPS.



PLACE

### **Recommendation 6 Develop QBuild list of preferred contractors**

The QPS engage with QBuild to develop a list of preferred contractors across the state to ensure the provision of maintenance and remediation works are conducted to the requisite building standards, with the ability to deliver a standard of works that meets the unique requirements of custodial facilities.



PROCESS

### **Recommendation 7 Addressing privacy concerns and segregation of persons in custody**

The QPS enhance segregation from male prisoners and privacy for women and girls, by the designation of locations and/or cells for these cohorts.

Work in partnership with DYJVS and QCS to implement strategies that prioritise movement of remanded, particularly girls, and women from watch-house environments (WSJT 2 recommendations 105 and 106).



PROCESS

### **Recommendation 8 Baseline all in-cell services (including as meals, clothing, cleaning and laundry)**

The SCU baseline all watch-house functions including meals, clothing, cleaning and laundry and centralise all procurement and contract management across the state to implement minimum standards and generate fiscal efficiencies. SCU to seek specialist advice on nutritional standards and guidelines for food provision in watch-houses, which guide procurement of appropriate catering contracts that meet minimum standards.

## **Prisoner transportation**

Prisoners may be transported for several reasons, such as transfer to other watch-house facilities, to court, to detention centres or corrective services facilities, to facilitate return to prison warrants and to access health services.

The QPS, as part of managing demands on watch-houses, may transport prisoners to other watch-houses to manage overcrowding issues, segregation requirements, staff availability and safety concerns. The transfer of prisoners to other watch-houses may also involve extensive travel across the state, for example from Brisbane to Townsville or Thursday Island to Cairns.

Transporting prisoners by road or air is inherently risky for police and watch-house officers, particularly when carried out with minimal support. Each journey demands meticulous planning, secure logistics, and constant vigilance. The significant impost on frontline policing means officers are taken off frontline policing, reducing their capacity to respond to emergencies, prevent crime, and maintain community safety, ultimately compromising broader public safety in some instances.

The movement of children is prioritised if they have not been transferred to an appropriate youth detention facility within 72 hours unless exceptional circumstances exist, such as where the DYJVS advise a bed is available in a youth detention centre, but transport cannot be reasonably facilitated until the next or subsequent day. This means children may spend additional time in watch-houses than is necessary. Other factors that require custody management includes when capacity limits of watch-houses reach 70%, 85%, 100%, and over 100%.

The coordination of prisoner transport is managed between a combination of the SCU and the districts. Transfers between watch-houses to alleviate capacity issues are centrally coordinated by the SCU, while other transportations are managed locally, creating a disconnect in the custody management system. This disconnect results in communication challenges, data discrepancies and the inability to accurately measure the exact nature and extent of transportation activities undertaken.

The displacement of prisoners from community has been identified as a concern with connection to community critical for prisoner wellbeing. The issue of displacement was recognised within the explanatory notes to the *Corrective Services Act 2000*, where the purpose of the provision was to enable prisoners, who are serving terms of imprisonment of less than 21 days, to remain in regional or remote watch-houses for that period. In this way, the prisoner remains in their community and the cost to the QPS of transporting and escorting the prisoner to a corrective services facility is avoided. However, while the intention of the provision was to reduce displacement, demands on watch-houses to ensure health and safety of staff and prisoners has made this unavoidable.

The QPS also transports prisoners who have been arrested pursuant to a 'return to prison' warrant, meaning they have breached parole conditions, and the Parole Board has issued a warrant requiring a police response to arrest the person and take them to a prison. Operational policies of both the QPS and QCS dictate that return to warrant prisoners are usually taken to a watch-house in the first instance for processing prior to transfer to a correctional facility in accordance with the usual mechanisms for transfers of prisoners to QCS. This process, which has emerged over time rather than by specific policy, highlights how prisoner transportation responsibility has shifted to QPS, and is expected and capitalised on by other agencies.

While the guarding of detainees in hospitals and medical centres is out of scope of the review terms of reference, the Review team examined this in the context of impacts on watch-houses and frontline resources and these duties being undertaken for QCS and DYJVS prisoners as a result of extended lengths of stay.

## Transport demand

The nature and extent of prisoner transport activities, including the reason for transport, prisoner type, and resources involved is not currently reliably captured. The Review team anticipates that the available data significantly underestimates the actual costs and resourcing demands. To illustrate the impact of transport and hospital guard duties on frontline resources, the Review used several indicators including Local Computer Aided Dispatch (LCAD), SCU data, case studies, and survey responses. The QPS conducts a majority of transports for DYJVS and QCS prisoners in police custody between watch-houses and youth detention centres and correctional facilities and, in some cases, the transportation of prisoners at DYJVS or QCS facilities to watch-houses to access court Video-Link functions. QPS is also responsible for most prisoner movements for subsequent court appearances along with the housing and guarding of the prisoners.

The SCU transport coordination data holdings identified that, in a 12-month period, between October 2023 and October 2024, the QPS conducted 6,108 transports of which 12% were by air and 88% by road. This equals approximately 17,216 hours for resources and transport combined.<sup>9</sup> Road transports, which can carry up to 12 prisoners at a time, require at least two officers. Air transports, which can carry up to six prisoners at a time, require at least three officers, with at least one sworn officer required for each transport. More officers may be required depending on aircraft configuration and passenger requirements; for example, violent offenders or mixed gender prisoners. Air transport also places strain on watch-house staffing at both departure and arrival locations. For example, a six-prisoner transport from Cairns Watch-house to Richlands Watch-house requires three QPS officers to board the aircraft and two additional officers to meet the crew on arrival, ready for road transport.<sup>10</sup>

## Transport to health services and hospital guard duties

Frontline resources, including police officers and vehicles, are being heavily re-directed to provide prisoner transport or undertake hospital guard duties. In 2024, Intelligence, Tactical and Analysis System (ITAS) data indicated approximately 71,112 frontline officer hours were spent on transporting prisoners statewide, which equates to about 8,889 shifts calculated based on 8-hour shifts.<sup>11</sup> There were also approximately 226,341 police officer hours on hospital/prisoner guard duties, equating to about 28,293 shifts.<sup>12</sup> This means that a low estimate of 37,182 frontline shifts were spent transporting, escorting, or guarding prisoners across the state in 2024. To illustrate the magnitude of this resource burden, this equates to assigning all frontline officers from Boondall, Inala, and Stafford stations to conduct transport and hospital guard duties on a full-time basis. Based on officer salaries, this equates to an approximate upper limit of \$56.5 million spent on overtime wages alone and does not include transport vehicle cost such as fuel and maintenance.<sup>13</sup> Diverting vital resources away from the frontline for transportation and prisoner hospital guard duties generates an opportunity deficit for community safety and reducing victimisation, as well as exacerbating frontline demand and resourcing issues.

Survey respondents from across all response group categories, including from watch-house staff, OICs, and QPS executives, said prisoner transportation was a major concern, with some saying it was the biggest challenge in managing demand in the watch-house. The added burden of transportation duties on top of other onerous and time-consuming watch-house functions has been identified as an area of concern.

*“...The day shift is very demanding - with the hourly checks, managing court, solicitors, arranging transports and staffing normally on overtime, dealing with juveniles - managing juveniles is very demanding, and also having to organise meals, medical appointments, taking prisoners to hospital, medication etc. Especially when you are working alone.”*

*“We do not have enough staff to facilitate transport of prisoners to hospitals, other watch-houses or jails and have to pull crews off the road multiple times a day to facilitate these transfers.”*

A case example provided by a submitter below demonstrates the impact of these duties on the QPS, particularly where the prisoner is a QCS or DYJVS prisoner yet remains in the custody of the QPS:

*“A prisoner in a QPS watch-house was held for over 25 days, despite attempts to transfer them to QCS custody. The commencement of the prisoners’ watch-house stay began when they were arrested by police on a warrant. On day one of the prisoner being held in the watch-house, they were presented before the court and ordered by the Magistrate to be held in custody until their next court appearance, scheduled for the following week. The prisoner returned to the watch-house after attending court and remained there for another 5 days.*

*As the prisoner spent more time in the watch-house, their hostility and aggravation increased, resulting in an incident where QPS staff encountered violent behaviour, exposure to bodily contaminants, and significant damage to the watch-house cell. Following this event, the prisoner was transported to the nearest hospital for a mental health assessment. Over the subsequent 15 days, 90 officers were diverted from frontline duties in a highly populated metropolitan area during peak holiday season to supervise the prisoner in the hospital 24/7. The QPS officers received substantial overtime pay (including public holiday rates), and faced an elevated risk of fatigue. Once the treatment was completed and the prisoner received medical clearance, they were transported back to the watch-house to await their next hearing.*

*Through formal procedural channels, Watch-house staff continually requested the prisoner be transferred to the care of QCS. Even though the prisoner was remanded in custody from day one of being held in the watch-house, QCS declined the transfer until day 25. The prisoner was monitored by QPS staff for longer than necessary.”*

## Opportunities to reduce prisoner transport demands

Unlike other jurisdictions where prisoner transports are outsourced or shared,<sup>14</sup> in Queensland the QPS assumes more responsibility for prisoner transports. Developing alternative transport models in collaboration with other criminal justice agencies, including the expansion or uptake in VideoLink services to be provided to prisoners held in a watch-house, outsourcing transport services, or employing dedicated staff for prisoner transportation need to be fully considered to return officers to the frontline, minimise fatigue and burnout, and reduce excessive costs to the QPS through overtime payments, flights and vehicle costs.

The QPS has initiated, as part of this review, the development of a prisoner transportation application which was launched in selected watch-houses to collect much needed detailed information and evidence regarding the true demand on police resources. It is anticipated that data collected will be utilised in the development of future prisoner transport options.

## Recommendations relating to prisoner transport



### PROCESS

#### Recommendation 9 Length of stay in watch-houses

The QPS to prepare a policy position for Government to consider a maximum length of prisoner stay in watch-houses and holding cells relative to the classification of the facility (see re-designation of watch-houses in Recommendation 2). A 72 hour maximum length of stay is consistent with Coronial recommendations (Tilberoo and Wylucki Inquest), and prioritising safety and expedient transfer of women and girls (Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce (WSJT) Report 2 recommendations 105 and 106).



### PROCESS

#### Recommendation 10 Establish a whole-of-system prisoner transport model

The QPS collaborate with other criminal justice agencies to develop a joint whole-of-government business case regarding options for a future prisoner transport model, and performance of hospital guard duties. To support the business case, a consistent and centralised data collection system is required to accurately measure the nature and extent of prisoner transports and hospital guards across the state.

## Building the workforce

This section addresses the need for improvement in the recruitment and training of the watch-house workforce, including embarking on cultural reform to enhance professionalism in watch-house environments.

Building the workforce includes implementing consistent demand and risk-based workforce models which consider prisoner demand, facility classification and design, and the requirement to undertake other functions such as prisoner transportation or hospital guards. Taking care of the workforce so that they are well equipped to capably deliver watch-house functions is a critical area identified by the Review. These recommendations align to the People Terms of Reference theme, and focus on improving job readiness, professionalism, and greater consistency around the custodial workforce.

### Recruitment

Prior to 2020, recruitment for watch-house officers including AWOs was managed locally on an as-needed basis. Current recruitment is managed through the SCU, however, the Review was told that the involvement of SCU is variable.

Current recruitment practices have also attracted criticism, particularly regarding the limited number of First Nations people recruited for duty in remote and regional locations. The Review was told that recruiting and retaining First Nations staff as watch-house officers can significantly improve care for First Nations prisoners in watch-house custody. Research shows that diverse teams are better equipped to respond to complex social issues by providing cultural insights and communication skills to balance the needs of different people.

The Review recommends developing a working group with the QPS People Capability Command (PCAP) to enhance watch-house recruitment strategies, including the possibility of leveraging other QPS applicant pools. There is also an opportunity to explore community-based AWO roles, to meet the needs of discrete and remote communities.

### Training and mentoring

Prior to 2020, all training for watch-house staff was delivered locally with no standardised requirements or learning materials apart from the online learning products (OLPs). Presently, the completion of training is at the discretion of the relevant OIC, which the Review was told results in inconsistencies across the state. The Review was told that these variations have resulted in parts of the workforce being inadequately prepared for

the complexities of the watch-house environment, which can increase risk to staff and the organisation. Risks include non-compliance with policy and legislative requirements and increased exposure to non-mitigated operational hazards.

The Review found training procedures lacked consistency and standardisation, and records management processes for training delivery was found to be inadequate and, in some instances, absent. The Tilberoo and Wylucki Inquest<sup>15</sup> highlighted deficiencies in the recruitment and training of staff in watch-houses, as well as the need for sufficient oversight and accountability in the operation of custodial facilities.

In 2019, a training package was developed to address knowledge and capability gaps for the watch-house workforce. The package was designed to be delivered through various learning methods including face-to-face, OLP, and on-the-job mentoring. The QPS Ignite Learning Management system provides necessary reporting and compliance monitoring for the training package. The curriculum was designed to ensure all aspects of custodial management were addressed, including legislative requirements, human rights, custodial practices, use of force, crisis management and WHS.

## Policy

Chapter 16.21.3 of the OPM outlines the QPS policy in relation to training requirements for watch-house staff, with a direct link to the State Custody Internal SharePoint page for expanded information on the relevant OLPs:

*“Prior to, or immediately after commencing watch-house duties, officers are to complete the current Service-approved OLPs on the State Custody Unit SharePoint page managed through the Ignite learning management system. Officers are encouraged to further their professional development by completing additional watch-house related training materials, such as 5 Minute Intensive Learning Experience (5MILE) videos and OLPs beyond the mandatory requirements.”*

*“Newly appointed watch-house officers are required to be paired with a mentor who possesses at least 12 months of experience in watch-house operations. This mentorship aims to provide ongoing training and ensure the completion of necessary workplace assessments. All training and assessments conducted during the mentorship period are to be documented and uploaded to Ignite or Development and Performance (DAP) system as appropriate.”*

The Review found that staff in substantive watch-house positions are automatically enrolled in the Watch-house Training Program. In contrast, officers performing duties on an irregular, ad-hoc basis are not enrolled. Surveys and submissions to the Review recommend this is an area that needs improvement.

The Review considers that WHS legislation and codes of practice need to be further embedded by the QPS in policy, training and practice to meet the legislative intent and maintain safe work environments for watch-house staff.

Specified mandatory training requirements within the OPM exist only in reference to Operational Skills and Tactics (OST), First Aid and CPR, and food handling and safety. Additionally, the OPM further indicates “Officers are encouraged to further their professional development by completing additional watch-house related training materials beyond the mandatory requirements.”<sup>16</sup>

Obligations to complete mandatory training and upskill are unclear and not supported by policy. The Review identified inconsistencies across the state with regards to requirements placed on staff to complete the relevant OLPs, with this being the most pronounced in watch-houses where watch-house duties are undertaken by general duties staff attached to stations. The Review recommends mandating training and minimum standards of completion of training for all staff working in watch-houses.

## Current watch-house officer training programs

The mixed staffing model comprising of sworn and unsworn officers requires two distinct curriculums, with a pre-service component required to onboard unsworn watch-house officers, and an in-service component for sworn officers. Pre-service training for AWOs commenced in 2023 with various iterations of the course since then, particularly in terms of content and duration, that is between three and five weeks. Pre-service training is intended to be complemented by additional online learning modules and on-the-job mentoring, with structured workplace assessments to record skill-based competencies.

Of note, the Review identified a need for any current or additional training that involves physical skills application, to be delivered in-person and practical-based, and not through an online training product.

The Review also identified gaps in the current training curriculum, including care for vulnerable persons and trauma informed training. This includes, mental health awareness, recognising child trauma and managing behaviour, and cultural sensitivity, particularly for First Nations peoples and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) persons. The Review considers specialised training modules will improve watch-house officers' competency in the care of vulnerable persons.

### ***Assistant Watch-house Officer training***

Pre-service training components include six categories: Watch-house Introduction and Processing Prisoners, Watch-house Operations, WHS, Human Rights, Policy and Legislation, and Operational Skills and Tactics. Curriculum is made up of both face-to-face training and OLPs, which are required to be completed before graduation and continue through the mentoring period.

The Review acknowledges that some pre-service training occurs, but there is inconsistency in the delivery and duration of each face-to-face course by different facilitators. Due to the diverse backgrounds of AWOs, it cannot be assumed that a short course alone will adequately prepare staff for operational roles in a watch-house.

The Review also determined that training needs to include content on effectively managing specific groups within the prisoner population. It should encompass additional curriculum addressing mental health issues, the use of screening and assessment tools, recognising and managing child trauma and positive behaviour management strategies for children in custody. Training should also include supporting prisoners with disabilities and fostering practices that support cultural safety and capability, particularly for First Nations people and CALD individuals. The QPS needs to maintain comprehensive records of all induction and training activities.

**Annexure 4** highlights proposed additional requirements to the curriculum necessary to delivery comprehensive training which supports the delivery of recommendations from the 2024 Queensland Ombudsman Cairns and Murgon Watch-house Inspection Report (Cairns and Murgon Watch-house Inspection Report).<sup>17</sup>

### ***Sworn officer training***

As at 31 December 2024, the training completion rate for sworn officers remains notably low. Currently, there is very limited specialised training provided for sworn officers to undertake watch-house duties during recruit training, with requirements limited to the completion of two OLPs prior to graduation, specifically Custody: Care and Management, and Queensland Police Records and Management Exchange (QPRIME): Introduction to Custody. First Year Constables (FYC) may perform duties in the watch-house either on a rotational basis as part of the FYC program or on an ad-hoc arrangement. This practice varies across districts and is not a compulsory requirement.

Officers who are assigned watch-house duties, either in a rotational or substantive position, have a requirement to meet the minimum standards of training necessary to perform the functions of watch-house prisoner management, which are contained within the QPS Ignite Learning Management system. The demanding environment of watch-houses requires additional training and knowledge for officers assigned to these duties, to effectively address the needs of prisoners, especially those with specific health or mental health conditions and vulnerabilities.

Implementing a mandatory training requirement for both sworn and unsworn staff would establish a minimum standard of competency across the workforce, providing a foundational skill baseline. Subsequently, a further training needs analysis should be conducted to ensure that adequate coverage and skill levels are achieved within the watch-house environment.

To establish a baseline of training competency for all watch-house staff, the Review recommends that a working group is established with SCU and PCAP to examine the scope of training for all watch-house staff, and to implement a strategy which uplifts training coverage along with a system to monitor compliance.

After staff complete their mandatory training, they must maintain their skills by undergoing annual qualification updates. Like sworn members, AWOs are required to undertake yearly re-qualification in Operational Skills

and Tactics (OST). The Review was told many challenges currently exist to deliver this training for Watch-house staff, including obtaining suitable instructors, delivering appropriate and relevant curriculum, and accessing suitable facilities to deliver the training. In addition to OST training, opportunities must be provided to all watch-house staff to maintain skills and knowledge which includes First Aid, competency-based assessments such as de-escalation, and other relevant training materials.

### **Officers-in-Charge Training**

The role of the OIC is pivotal to enhancing professionalism within watch-houses. Although there are numerous management tasks and responsibilities that necessitate advanced training, the primary challenge in the watch-house setting is fostering and supporting strong leaders to be capable of driving and implementing best practice. OICs hold significant influence within the Service and can profoundly affect workplace culture, behaviour, morale, welfare and performance.

Currently, the selection process for a watch-house OIC does not mandate prior watch-house experience. While successful candidates may possess the necessary knowledge, skills, and experience to serve as an OIC, there often remains a gap in specific aspects of custody management. At present, there is no training or support available to aid in the development of leadership and management skills for watch-house OICs, resulting in critical capability gaps within the QPS custody management framework.

The SCU has initiated preparations for a tailored Watch-house OIC workshop. This program will be complemented by a face-to-face course, encompassing both the technical aspects of watch-house management and broader leadership elements. A key part of this initiative is the addition of psychological safety and wellbeing training for OICs, to address the stressful conditions in which their staff work. The Review was told that the continued development and delivery of this program is on hold pending the outcomes of this Review.

### **Role of State Custody Unit**

The role of the SCU is:

*“Improving the operational effectiveness of watch-houses across the state through the strategic overview of legislation, policy and processes relating to the management of persons in custody at watch-houses and holding cells across the state.”*

While PCAP holds primary responsibility for training and development across the QPS, there is a requirement for capability owners across the organisation to drive the development and delivery of training for their areas. SCU, as the central capability owner for watch-houses, has the responsibility for driving the development and delivery of training for custody for the organisation.

Currently, the training development capability regarding watch-house recruitment and roles and responsibilities in SCU is managed by a Principal Project Officer (AO7).

The training team consists of:

- 1 x AO6 Training and Development Coordinator (Permanent)
- 3 x AO5 Training Coordinators/Facilitators (Temporary)
- 2 x AO4 Business Support Officers (Temporary).

Continued staffing vacancies and operational impacts have resulted in the current staffing model reduced to three allocated full time equivalents (FTEs). The Recruitment section consists of 2 x AO4 Recruiting Officers (Temporary).

There are challenges in sustaining this capability within the SCU due to recurrent vacancies influenced by the temporary nature of the positions, the varying demands in recruitment and selection, and competing priorities within the unit.

The SCU Operational Plan outlines Activities and Performance Indicators to develop and maintain training for all staff working in watch-houses across the state. Whilst there is acknowledgement of the requirement to develop and deliver training as part of the operational plan, the limited consistency, structure and identified outcomes evident in the data from surveys and focus groups conducted would indicate that this is not being

operationalised effectively. The Review was told the limited staffing capacity to prioritise the development and delivery of training, along with the absence of structured planning, is contributing to a training gap.

Enhancing the professionalism of watch-houses across the state requires a dedicated capability ownership model, supported by structured planning and long-term consideration of the specific needs of watch-house custody management. The current training and recruitment activities undertaken by SCU would benefit from updated content and enhanced direction, as well as long-term strategic planning to establish the necessary model for the future workforce. Further, the existing staffing model likely requires adjustments to address gaps in capability and the delivery of training and professional development.

### ***State Custody Unit capability uplift***

QPS watch-houses operate under a decentralised model in which each district is responsible for managing its own watch-house facilities, workforce, and processes. Each district functions independently, with limited central governance or oversight. However, since the inception of the SCU in 2021, some strategic functions have been undertaken such as coordinating prisoner movements across the state to address capacity issues, staff training, and advocacy on behalf of the QPS with other agencies.

The review recommends the SCU engage in the following key activities to enhance compliance and professionalism among watch-house staff:

- Develop a comprehensive compliance framework to ensure adherence to established standards;
- Implement a mandatory mentoring program for watch-house officers within the Ignite training platform, with a minimum duration of six months;
- With PCAP, review recruitment activities and create a more robust talent pipeline;
- With First Nations Division, develop and operationalise a policy framework targeting recruitment activities in discrete and remote communities, supporting community-based custodial management;
- Review training content, including by leveraging Australia New Zealand Policing Advisory Agency (ANZPAA) guidelines, and conduct a training needs analysis, to build a fit-for-purpose and comprehensive training model for watch-house staff; and
- Require all staff undertaking watch-house duties in any capacity, including full-time and part-time officers, or officers on a rotational basis, complete mandatory training requirements.

The Review highlights the need to bring consistency and standardisation across the QPS watch-house network, covering key areas such as workforce, budget, infrastructure, logistics and transport, and governance and policy. To accomplish this, enhanced SCU capability and resourcing is required to ensure reform and standardisation across the watch-house network is achieved.

## **Psychosocial and physical injury risks**

### ***Psychosocial risks in watch-houses***

The Review acknowledges the impact of psychosocial risks on the workforce within watch-house environments. On 1 April 2023, the Work Health and Safety (Psychosocial Risks) Regulation<sup>18</sup> and the Code of Practice<sup>19</sup> came into effect in Queensland, aimed at managing the risk of psychosocial hazards.

*“A psychosocial hazard is defined as a hazard that arises from, or relates to, the design or management of work, a work environment, plant at a workplace, or workplace interactions and behaviours and may cause psychological harm, whether or not the hazard may also cause physical harm.”<sup>20</sup>*

In 2024, the Queensland Police Union of Employees (QPUE) co-ordinated a major compliance inspection of all QPS watch-houses, herein referred to as the QPUE review. The QPUE review into QPS watch-houses identified that watch-house staff are exposed to psychosocial hazards due to the design and management of facilities. These risks are further compounded by poor interactions and behaviours within these facilities, contributing to psychological and physical harm.<sup>21</sup>

Key hazards, when combined, increase the risk of harm for watch-house staff. These include high job demands, violence and aggression, including sexual harassment, exposure to traumatic events, low role clarity, poor environmental conditions, poor change management, and low reward and recognition. These hazards result in multiple factors intersecting and creating further harm, if unchecked.

QPS watch-house staff reported to the QPUE review they frequently experience stress and periods of anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress, sleep disorders, musculoskeletal injuries, and fatigue-related illnesses.<sup>22</sup> While there are dynamic risks in watch-houses that may be challenging to manage, for example prisoner behaviour, there are hazards which, if not addressed or controlled, can combine to create a significantly higher risk of injury.

### Impact of Psychosocial hazards

Psychosocial hazards in the workplace can impact the workforce through both physical and psychological injuries when risks are not adequately addressed.

The impact on the QPS is significant with WorkCover costs attributed to watch-house staff alone exceeding \$5.6M (2019-2024).<sup>23</sup> In addition to WorkCover claims, there are significant impacts on the workforce with absenteeism affecting not only the individual staff member, but placing additional strain on the work unit, particularly in watch-houses where maintaining a minimum staffing roster is necessary but fluctuating demand creates resourcing gaps.

Comparatively across the state, watch-house staff take a greater amount of sick leave than the rest of QPS, with some locations averaging 41 days per employee per year, compared to the state average of 18 days (refer Figure 4) These findings are consistent with survey responses, where several respondents acknowledge they are seeing more staff taking sick leave, attributing this to watch-house conditions.

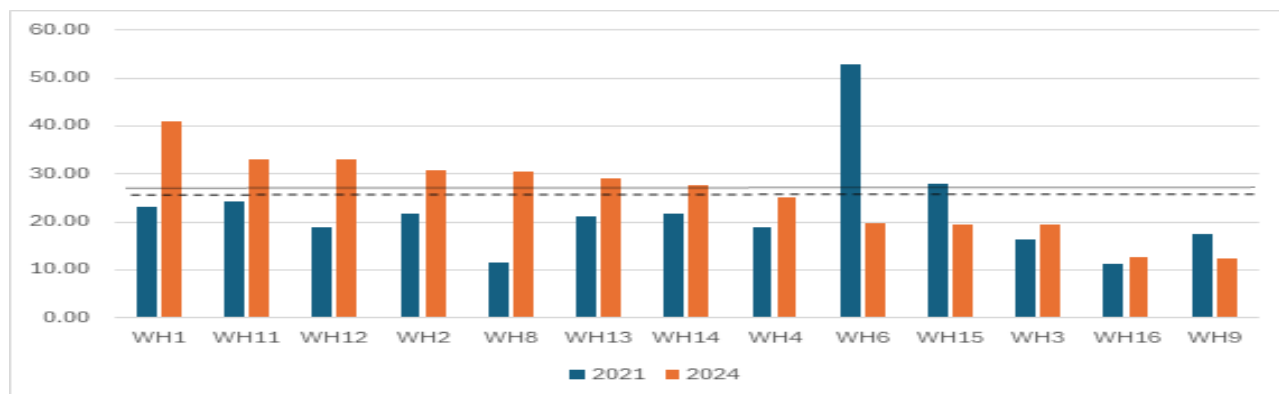


Figure 4: Average Leave Days Per Employee and Watch-house in 2021 and 2024. Black lines represent state averages. Note: Small, dotted line is 2024 average, dashed line is 2021 average.

### Psychological vs physical injury

In 2024, data from 17 of the busiest watch-houses showed that one in every seven watch-house staff in these facilities reported a physical injury. Meanwhile, the state average for all QPS was one in every nine staff experiencing a physical injury.<sup>24</sup> One in every 20 watch-house staff in these facilities reported a psychological injury, while the state average for all QPS was one in 50 staff. This data suggests that QPS staff working in watch-houses are heavily psychologically impacted by their work. Data from QPS Health Safety & Wellbeing Division<sup>25</sup> shows that injury costs are considerable and are expected to continue rising.

Figure 5 illustrates the increasing cost of WorkCover claims made by watch-house staff in Queensland, with the amount significantly increasing year on year. This data highlights the upward trend in workplace injuries within these environments and supports the need for change to lessen the physical risk and psychological impact experienced by the watch-house workforce.

Whilst physical injuries make up a greater proportion of the WorkCover claims within watch-houses (240 compared to 43 psychological), the cost for a psychological injury claim is significantly higher, with the average psychological injury costing \$74,000 compared to \$9,600 for a physical injury.<sup>26</sup> For all QPS injuries (refer Table 1), watch-house duties contributed to:

- 3% of all physical injuries;
- 5% of all psychological injuries; and
- 3% of all Workcover costs.

Notably, watch-house duties are within the top five contributors to psychological injuries across the QPS (after general policing, admin/clerical, other enforcement, and patrol).

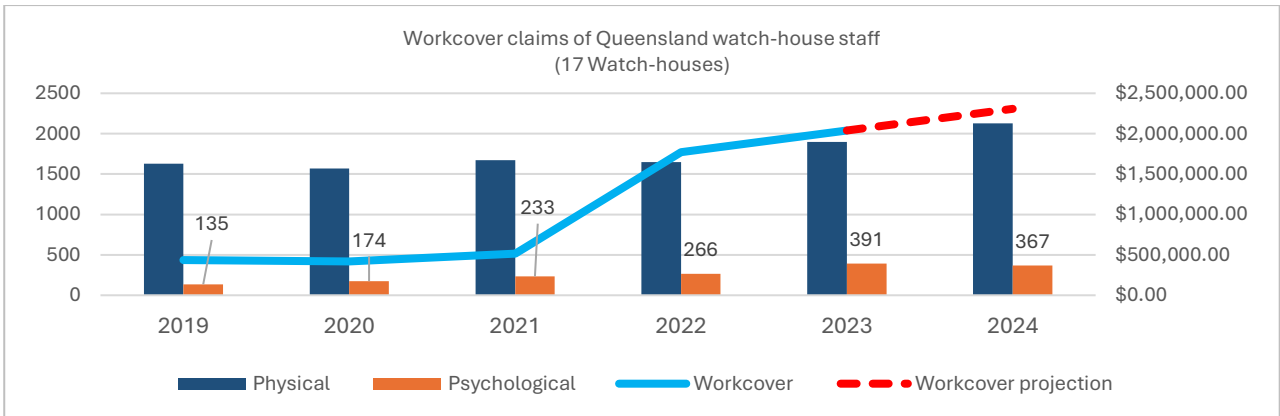


Figure 5: Illustrates the increase in WorkCover claims of watch-house staff for 17 watch-houses.

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
<b>Physical Injuries</b>						
Watch-house	35	24	39	43	47	61
QPS	1628	1571	1672	1647	1897	2127
<b>Psychological Injuries</b>						
Watch-house	1	1	3	9	17	19
QPS	135	174	233	266	391	367
<b>WorkCover costs</b>						
Watch-house	\$436,104.13	\$418,604.19	\$514,607.49	\$1,770,984.20	\$2,039,189.38	\$1,217,463.49
QPS	\$29,544,351.63	\$34,629,314.51	\$43,011,619.98	\$46,325,376.24	\$52,118,442.12	\$30,694,379.09

Table 1: Watch-house and whole of service injuries and WorkCover costs.

### Use of force complaints

The highly volatile and stressful nature of the watch-house environment lends itself to conflicts occurring, both between prisoners and watch-house staff. A quarter of the allegations in relation to watch-houses relate to assault or excessive use of force, with around one in four of these relating to child prisoners in 2024. Of these allegations, the vast majority of total complaints received in relation to watch-houses for both adults and youth were unsubstantiated, with less than 10% resolved through Local Management Resolution processes.<sup>27</sup>

The Review was unable to conduct a comparison of complaints against other policing functions, however, what can be taken from this data is that given the volume of watch-house interactions each year, the number of allegations is proportionately low. Nevertheless, any allegations highlight the need to reinforce and invest additional efforts toward enhancing professionalism and maintaining competencies of staff in watch-houses.

### Response to managing psychosocial risks

Within the QPS, psychosocial risks have been recognised as an area requiring focused attention, especially in terms of harm prevention and the management of identified risks. The psychosocial harms and risks associated with watch-houses are also risks reflected across policing generally. Consistent evidence gathered throughout the Review indicates that watch-houses pose a significant organisational risk in terms of psychosocial hazards. The high demand environment combined with low resourcing creates a workplace where there is greater likelihood of burnout, injury and illness (see Figure 6).

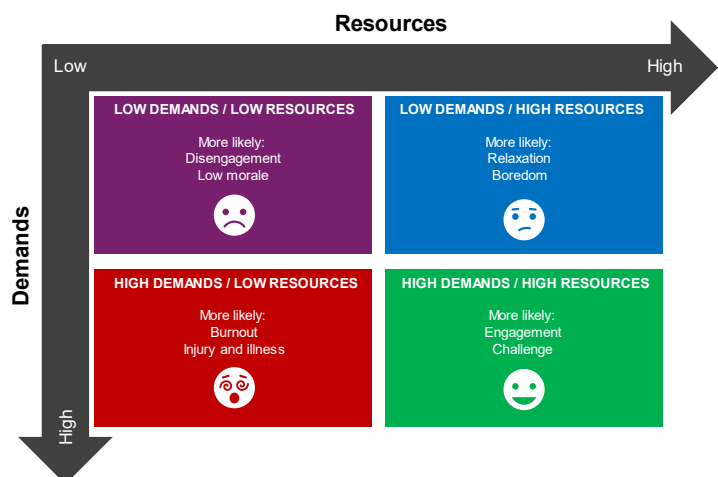


Figure 6: The interactions between job demands and job resources

While there is an organisation-wide initiative to prevent psychosocial harms in the workplace, watch-houses need prompt and specific attention to address potential exposure. The Review reflected the need to provide training and adequate resources to key decision makers, such as OICs of watch-houses, to understand what psychosocial safety means and learn practical ways in which hazards can be addressed and/or minimised in the watch-house environment.<sup>28</sup>

## **Workforce model**

A critical issue impacting watch-house operations statewide is the inconsistent resourcing of facilities. Despite the challenges and inconsistencies, the Review acknowledges the dedication and performance of watch-house staff statewide who continue to carry out their duties and provide care to prisoners, in a difficult and demanding environment. The purpose of this section is to outline gaps in the current watch-house workforce model (in terms of staff-to-prisoner ratios), identify key functions, and propose a framework to improve consistency in terms of workforce resource decision-making practices.

### ***Inconsistent staff-to-prisoner ratios***

While some watch-houses are deemed sufficiently staffed with both sworn officers and civilian AWOs to manage prisoners safely, many others face resource shortages, which can elevate risks for both staff and prisoners. Only 22 QPS custody facilities have full-time staff to support 24/7 custody operations. Staffing gaps affect community policing functions, as frontline officers are reassigned to support watch-house operations, including prisoner transports and hospital guard duties. More than one-quarter (26%) of watch-house staff and OICs expressed concerns about being understaffed, and 26% of watch-house OICs identified staff shortages as a key challenge.

During the Review, station OICs were asked to comment on the impact that watch-houses have on their stations and their frontline officers. Among the 75 respondents, 37% indicated their frontline officers were required to perform watch-house duties. Many station OICs noted that watch-house duties, including prisoner management, transports and hospital guard duties, affect their station's operations.

The QPUE review observed several indicators that staffing levels are insufficient:

- Critical tasks relating to staff and prisoner safety are not being completed;
- Low training compliance levels;
- Increasing levels of overtime within watch-houses;
- A growing number of watch-house staff are taking leave due to work-related issues, including stress, fatigue, and other health concerns; and
- Level of complaints.

A sample of daily prisoner numbers and the number of FTEs watch-house staff rostered on across a 24-hour shift period for a random selection of 16 watch-houses was conducted to analyse the variation in staff-to-prisoner ratios, between 20 March 2024 to 29 November 2024. The analysis found staff-to-prisoner ratios across the 16 watch-houses fluctuated considerably during any given shift, ranging from a ratio of one staff member to one prisoner, up to a ratio of one staff member to 23 prisoners. This variation highlights significant inconsistency in the resourcing framework and stresses the urgency to improve uniformity in staff-to-prisoner ratios across watch-houses.

The QPUE review also notes that watch-houses do not follow specific staff-to-prisoner ratios. Instead, additional staffing requests are managed by the OIC based on the needs of prisoners, such as protection, segregation, or violent behaviours. In light of this, the Review considers a more rounded risk-based rostering approach is required across watch-houses.

Across all surveys, 4% of respondents specified concerns with inadequate staff-to-prisoner ratios, impacting staff health and safety.

Overall, there is opportunity to develop a workforce model that drives consistency in staff-to-prisoner ratios statewide and the Review recommends a minimum three-month trial of a demand-based rostering model in line with watch-house operational requirements which are individual and dependent upon location.

## Recommendations relating to building the workforce



PEOPLE

### Recommendation 11 Enhancing recruitment strategies

The SCU to lead enhancement of the recruitment model for watch-house staff (both sworn and civilian), to increase identified First Nations positions and tailor recruitment requirements to boost applicant pools. A dedicated working group, comprising SCU and the PCAP, is to be established to address this.



PEOPLE

### Recommendation 12 Revised training program and onboarding of watch-house staff

PCAP to lead curriculum development in collaboration with SCU to overhaul the training model for watch-house staff (both sworn and civilian), to elevate professionalism of watch-house operations (e.g. increase scenario skills, tactical communication, behaviour management, caring for vulnerable groups, and cultural sensitivity). All revisions to training to be evaluated within 12 months of implementation.



PEOPLE

### Recommendation 13 Develop and implement training, culture and professional development

The QPS to prioritise development and implementation of training and professional development to influence culture for watch-house OICs, and ensure compliance prior to undertaking OIC roles, including short-term relieving.



PEOPLE

### Recommendation 14 Mandate OLP compliance

The QPS to mandate the completion of OLPs by all staff working in watch-houses, prior to undertaking any watch-house duties. This includes OIC training and professional development. SCU is to monitor and enforce watch-house officers' compliance with mandatory training.



PEOPLE

### Recommendation 15 Develop mandatory 6-month mentoring package for Assistance Watch-house Officers

The QPS to develop a mandatory six-month mentoring package for AWOs by adopting a similar model to the long established FYC program.



PEOPLE

### Recommendation 16 Community of best practice

The SCU to establish a quarterly forum with watch-house OICs to develop best practice principles to maintain professionalism and integrity within watch-houses and implement the principles across the network.



PEOPLE

### Recommendation 17 Develop a baseline rostering model

The QPS to continue to develop a consistent resourcing and rostering model for the effective management of watch-houses regardless of their capacity or location. As a priority, commence a trial of a new demand rostering model for at least three months in two large/super facilities with different layouts (i.e., pod and linear), which considers demand, overtime, staffing ratios, and higher demand prisoners. The outcomes of the trials are to be reported to the Strategic Custody Committee.



PROCESS

### Recommendation 18 State Custody Unit operating model uplift

The QPS uplift SCU capability through the creation of specific functions to drive consistency, efficiency, professionalism, and compliance with standards statewide. Functions include SCU to baseline and maintain all relevant information regarding all areas of watch-house operations.



PROCESS

### Recommendation 19 Transfer ownership of watch-houses to SCU

The QPS to transfer policy, training and professional development as well as auditing functions to SCU. The operational management and day to day running of watch-house is maintained by the Districts.



PLACE

### Recommendation 20 Risk mitigation to implement WHS controls

The QPS to undertake intensive risk mitigation activities to implement WHS controls in watch-houses.



PROCESS

### Recommendation 21 Psychosocial risk audits in watch-houses

The QPS Safety Strategy Division, in collaboration with SCU, to prioritise psychosocial risk audits of watch-houses and develop action plans for implementation of control measures in workplaces.

## Support services

The Review recommends enhanced access to health services, education, and cell visitor support schemes to ensure essential and consistent care is provided to prisoners in watch-houses.

### Health Services

Prisoners in watch-houses often experience higher rates of health concerns compared to the general population.<sup>29</sup> Previous external reports show high proportions of prisoners with mental health concerns, suicidality, communicable diseases, substance abuse, disabilities, and comorbidity.<sup>30</sup> Initial intake assessments are generally carried out by watch-house staff with limited health training, which can compromise accuracy. While the QPS has a duty of care for the health of all prisoners held in watch-houses, the QPS is not the health lead in providing health services and should not be responsible for assessing and managing a prisoner's health-related needs. The Review was told that watch-house staff find it challenging to assess prisoner's health needs, often leading to unnecessary hospital referrals, which impact QPS resources and burdens emergency departments. Additionally, prisoners may require ongoing care, such as the replacement of dressings that watch-house staff are not equipped to provide.

The provision of health services within Queensland watch-houses varies significantly. This is largely influenced by local resource availability, funding, and regional demand. While some watch-houses offer 24/7 healthcare with dedicated health service practitioners and spaces to operate, other watch-houses lack on-site health services and must rely on external providers or emergency services. The inconsistent delivery of health services and medical equipment contributes to gaps in prisoner care, particularly in high-demand watch-houses with high proportions of vulnerable populations. While virtual health services, such as those provided through the Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) Clinical Health Hub and Virtual Emergency Department (VED) are available, watch-house staff awareness of these models is limited.

*“Across the state there are various levels of medical support provided to watch-houses and a PIC should receive the same level of medical care regardless of the arrest location.”*

Previous reviews, such as the Cairns and Murgon Watch-house Review<sup>31</sup> and the Tilberoo and Wylucki Inquest,<sup>32</sup> have raised concerns about the current process, including the lack of health staff involved in providing expert care, insufficient privacy which discourages prisoners from disclosing sensitive health information, the potential for *gratuitous concurrence* (a communication style, common amongst First Nations peoples, whereby a person appears to agree with everything said to them, even where they do not agree or do not understand the question. This can manifest as saying “yes” to all questions asked<sup>33</sup>) and the absence of protocols for vulnerable groups.

*“We have no nurse in [watch-house name] and are constantly calling 000 to speak with paramedics to arrange medication and attend to check vitals.”*

Mental health assessments are also particularly challenging, as nearly all prisoners are evaluated for their 'fitness for custody', given the high rates of self-harm and suicidal ideation in this population. **Annexure 5** provides a detailed breakdown of health services and medical equipment, and prisoners with mental health and suicide caution flags in the 20 busiest watch-houses.

Health services delivered in the watch-house setting varies across Australian jurisdictions. For example, the Northern Territory Police Force deploys nurses at all major centres, while New South Wales (NSW) Police Force relies on the Department of Justice to manage health services within custodial environments.<sup>34</sup> Western Australia, Victoria, and South Australia Police rely on contracted health services. The availability of integrated health services to deliver vital care tailored to the specific needs of all persons held in custody, including vulnerable persons such as women and girls, children and First Nations people, should be prioritised.

### **Medication Management**

A significant proportion of prisoners require prescribed medications. Medication management within a watch-house is governed by the *Medicines and Poisons Act 2019* (the Act). The Act indicates watch-house staff are allowed to supply and administer medication to prisoners provided that the medicine has been 'lawfully supplied' for 'therapeutic treatment'. The relevant legislation when passed, did not specify watch-houses as 'relevant institutions' despite this being the intent as provided in the Explanatory Notes.<sup>35</sup> This non-specification of watch-houses as a 'relevant institution' may be an area of risk for QPS watch-houses in maintaining lawful authority to stock and administer medication.

In some instances, when prisoners are released or transferred, a substantial amount of medication is disposed of, creating unnecessary costs and resource inefficiencies.<sup>36</sup> An additional issue is the appropriate training of watch-house staff. Watch-house staff receive a one-hour training session on medication administration, which the Review considers is insufficient.

*"A large part of our job is to ensure prisoners are cared for and kept alive whilst in our custody, which includes our dispensing prescribed medication and assessing prisoners' needs. Our knowledge of the effects of the different sorts of medications are limited, and should a prisoner need a change to a script/dosage or need a different sort of medication, we can't assist them straight away, as we do not have a 24-hour nurse on site."*

### **Health Services for Vulnerable Persons**

The health challenges faced by vulnerable groups including women, children and First Nations people in watch-houses are significant. These populations can experience complex physical and mental health issues, many of which are exacerbated by the inadequacies of the current custodial environment.<sup>37</sup>

#### **Women and Girls**

Women and girls in custody often have histories of domestic violence, sexual abuse and trauma.<sup>38</sup> The watch-house environment is largely designed with adult men in mind, leaving female prisoners with insufficient access to gender-responsive healthcare services, including for reproductive health and trauma-informed care.<sup>39</sup>

One submission highlighted the importance of providing adequate care and hygiene to women and girls in watch-houses through the supply of sanitary products, clean underwear, access to showers daily, privacy when using the toilet and shower and the ability to dispose of used products in a manner which ensures dignity.<sup>40</sup> This aligns with a recommendation made in the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce Report 2 to clearly provide for minimum standards of the care for women and girls while they are held in a police watch-house and require compliance with these standards.

#### **Children**

The detention of children in watch-houses for extended periods has been widely criticised by oversight bodies.<sup>41</sup> Many children in custody have pre-existing mental health conditions, disabilities, and histories of trauma, compared to the adult prisoner population.<sup>42</sup> The Cairns and Murgon Watch-house Inspection Report highlighted inconsistent health assessments for children upon entry, resulting in mental health conditions, developmental disorders, and physical illnesses going unidentified. Watch-houses are not equipped to provide the space, privacy, natural light or support needed for children's physical and psychological well-being. This can result in heightened anxiety, distress and an increased risk of self-harm. The absence of paediatric

healthcare professionals further compounds these issues, making the watch-house environment unsafe for minors.

The Cairns and Murgon Watch-house Inspection Report also highlights the importance of providing nutritional food to children in watch-houses.<sup>43</sup> The Review found there are significant inconsistencies in the quality of prisoner food across the state, with no standards for what constitutes nutritional food for children or adults.

### **First Nations**

First Nations peoples are disproportionately represented in the Queensland justice system. This overrepresentation is linked to historical and systemic inequalities. Anecdotally, the Review understands that due to First Nations peoples historical engagements with police, the circumstances with which they enter custody and cultural reasons, there is often a reluctance to discuss health issues with police. This leads to conditions remaining unidentified, such as diabetes, heart disease, infections or serious injuries.

### **Health Information Sharing**

The lack of integration between health and QPS information systems further complicates the delivery of care to prisoners. Privacy policies, though essential for safeguarding sensitive information, prevent the timely sharing of medical histories, which is crucial for effective prisoner care. The current system results in repeated assessments when prisoners are transferred to other facilities, contributing to delays in care and creating bottlenecks in the system.<sup>44</sup> Care for individuals in watch-house custody is a shared government responsibility. To address these issues, the Review considers an integrated model of health services is necessary to ensure that prisoner health histories are available when needed.

### **Education**

The *Queensland Human Rights Act 2019*, section 36 guarantees every child's right to access primary and secondary education. This is also outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child,<sup>45</sup> extending to children in custodial facilities.<sup>46</sup> While detention centres provide education to children in custody, these services are not universally provided in watch-houses. This aligns with the position that watch-houses are not suitable environments for children.<sup>47</sup> The Caboolture Watch-house, when it was operating as a Youth Hub, provided an educational model for detained children five days a week, 48 weeks across the year. The Review team observed this model was a positive interaction experience for the youth in custody.

At the Caboolture Watch-house Education Support Hub during December 2024, there were 19 children (aged 13-17 years) who engaged in teaching sessions<sup>48</sup> (59% of the total that month). In January, a total of 94 children (aged 12-17 years) engaged with educational services.<sup>49</sup> The average time these children spent in the watch-house was three to five days. Anecdotal evidence from the Caboolture Watch-house Youth Hub and Department of Education (DoE) indicates positive behavioural outcomes for children who have engaged in watch-house educational services.

When DYJVS are unable to accept a child into a youth detention centre the review considers it important to explore co-design possibilities, including delivering education services via VideoLink (where available).

The Review considers there is an opportunity to establish a cross-agency working group including QPS, DYJVS, DoE, and other relevant stakeholders, to integrate educational services in watch-houses.

### **Recommendations relating to support services**



PROCESS

#### **Recommendation 22**

#### **Co-designed delivery of health services to persons in custody**

The QPS to partner with Queensland Health (QH) to further expand the delivery of co-designed health services (including mental health and medication dispensing and administering), for all watch-houses including utilising VideoLink technology.



PROCESS

### Recommendation 23

### Review of intake assessment tools

The QPS, in partnership with QH, DYJVS and QCS, develop and implement an appropriate initial intake assessment tool tailored for processing children and adults (including First Nations people) into a watch-house



PROCESS

### Recommendation 24

### Delivery of education services for children in watch-houses

The QPS partner with DoE to further expand the delivery of co-designed education services for children in watch-houses, including utilising VideoLink technology.

## Policies and procedures

### Operational Procedures Manual and Custody Manual

Opportunities for improvement include the development of a new Custody Manual to consolidate and clearly present watch-house procedures and standards, as well as developing methods to effectively communicate the complaints process to prisoners, especially children. Clarification of standards for all persons working in watch-houses will drive consistency, compliance and will improve overall effectiveness.

Chapter 16 of the OPM relates to custody and contains the most relevant information for QPS regarding watch-house functions. However, due to numerous parts cross-referencing other chapters and sections of the OPM, the Review was told it is difficult to follow, contradictory and ambiguous. For example, according to the OPM, it is mandatory for watch-houses with a pod or wing design to ensure that prisoners are continuously supervised by an officer at all times, with a dedicated officer to be assigned to each pod or wing.<sup>50</sup> For watch-houses without a pod or wing, prisoners are to be monitored constantly through CCTV, by an officer who is solely assigned to this task without additional duties.<sup>51</sup> The OPM also states that constant visual supervision may be required for prisoners with known significant risk factors.<sup>52</sup> The Review was told that officers are confused regarding the wording of chapter 16.9.5 of the OPM and whether CCTV supervision for pods and wings is required in addition to an officer who is continuously supervising prisoners in those pods and wings.

The Review was also told there are vast inconsistencies across watch-houses regarding operationalisation of policies and procedures, noting differences between local instructions across watch-houses statewide. Through the development of a standalone point of truth in the form of a custody manual the QPS has an opportunity to improve standardised practices in watch-houses and drive clarity and consistency in the management of these environments.

### Cell visitor support schemes

The Cell Visitor Scheme was established in Queensland following the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody in 1991.<sup>53</sup> The scheme aims to ensure the welfare and rights of individuals in watch-houses by providing access to approved visitors. Visitors could include community members, legal representatives, specialists, and other authorised personnel who monitor custody conditions, support detainees, including counselling, health assessments, prevent self-harm, provide information on available services and report concerns to the relevant authorities.

The SCU oversee the Cell Visitor Scheme, which operates in two phases: the authorisation phase (vetting applicants and providing orientation) and the visitation phase (where authorised visitors conduct cell visits).<sup>54</sup> The vetting process is outlined in the *Police Service Administration Act 1990* and the *Police Service Administration Regulation 2016* and its application is inconsistent with training documents differing around the State.

There are a range of benefits that can be realised with consistent cell visitor schemes that operate statewide to oversee prisoner health and wellbeing, offering company, support, and assistance to prevent self-harm, suicide, and at-risk behaviour. For instance, Murri Watch is a key service provider across multiple watch-house locations. In 2020, Murri Watch reported no incidents of self-harm among First Nations people in custody.<sup>55</sup> Murri Watch supported 3,774 clients across their service areas, and 7,394 cell visits were conducted.<sup>56</sup> Visitors

help distribute responsibility for prisoner care and monitoring by supporting First Nations prisoners and reducing incidents of self-harm.

Queensland's vast geographical landscape comprising urban, rural and remote communities creates challenges for cell visitor accessibility, with the Review being informed that rural and remote communities have no services available for prisoners.<sup>57</sup> For example, one non-government organisation operates in only 14 of 63 watch-houses statewide. Additionally, while other entities including DYJVS, Court Liaison Officers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service representatives attend watch-houses to provide support, the demand often exceeds available resources. Watch-house staff shortages are also a contributing factor to the accessibility and management of the Cell Visitor Scheme.

The Review identified several areas for improvement within the Cell Visitor Scheme, including streamlining processes, enhancing governance and ensuring consistency in visitation services throughout all watch-houses. Alternate methods of visitation, including consideration of VideoLink capabilities, would assist prisoners, however, technology and space for private consultations must be addressed and made available.

## **Bail frameworks and application**

### ***Children***

As outlined in the *Youth Justice Act 1992*, decisions regarding children's bail or custody must be informed by the risk of the child committing an offence that endangers the community and whether bail conditions could mitigate this risk.<sup>58</sup> Decisions can also be based on the child's likelihood of surrendering into custody or interfering with the course of justice. Welfare concerns, such as no accommodation or family support, are not sufficient alone to keep a child in custody.

If a child is released without bail, they may be released to their parents or released to go at large with relevant authorities notified, for example a parent or the Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety.<sup>59, 60</sup> If an officer decides to release a child on bail, the officer may only impose conditions, other than a condition about appearing in court or surrendering into custody, if the officer believes an unacceptable risk exists in releasing the child and the condition is necessary to mitigate the risk. When considering bail conditions, the officer is to consider the child's age, maturity level, health needs, disability support needs, home environment and ability to comply with the condition.

When an officer releases a child, with or without bail, the Review found it takes time to locate a responsible adult before the child is released. This process extends the amount of time that children are held in watch-houses.

### ***Adults***

Under the *Bail Act 1980*, an adult awaiting resolution of a charge is entitled to be considered for bail. However, to be granted bail, adults who have been arrested must first be brought into custody at a watch-house or police station. The behaviour of the person will determine which facility they will be transported to; for example, a person behaving violently or under the influence of drugs or alcohol will likely be taken to a watch-house, while a person who is compliant may be suitable to take to a police station. The power to grant bail is only provided to a prescribed officer which must be the OIC of a police station or establishment, or a watch-house manager. Where an OIC or watch-house manager is unavailable, a person cannot be granted bail, meaning they will remain in police custody for longer than necessary.

The *Bail Act 1980* outlines specific provisions under which police are to refuse bail and remand the person in custody, including where the person should remain in custody for their own protection or there is an unacceptable risk that the person would fail to appear and surrender into custody or would, while released on bail, commit an offence, endanger the safety of a person or obstruct the course of justice.<sup>61</sup> In assessing unacceptable risk, police consider the nature and seriousness of the offence, the personal circumstances of the person, the person's bail history, any cultural considerations and, where the person is charged with a domestic violence offence, the risk of further domestic violence being committed by the person.<sup>62</sup> The Review found that arrested persons with a previous conviction for a breach of a domestic violence order within the last two years are more likely to be refused bail by police.

The presumption in favour of granting bail is reversed when a person is in a 'show cause' position. This includes offences committed while on bail, offences against the *Bail Act 1980*, offences involving the use of weapons,

certain offences relating to organised crime and offences punishable by mandatory life imprisonment.<sup>63</sup> Adults who commit these offences are to be kept in a watch-house until they can appear before a court to 'show cause' to be granted bail. 8% of all survey respondents indicated that prisoners held in watch-houses due to 'show cause' bail processes are contributing to the overcrowding of facilities.

The Review team also identified inconsistencies in how police bail is administered. In particular, the Review team was told there may be instances of hesitation and reduced confidence among police officers to grant bail at a police station rather than a watch-house.

The Review recommends the development of a risk-based framework to assist officers in the application of the *Bail Act 1980* and address the reported risk aversion practice among police officers in permitting bail. The development and roll-out of prescribed officer training will provide objectivity, consistency, confidence, clarity and a structured decision-making process to reduce barriers in granting bail, therefore facilitating improved practices to divert offenders away from watch-houses where possible.

The Review also identified opportunities to shift workload from watch-houses, with the Review recommending that the feasibility of roadside bail be explored further.

## Recommendations relating to policies and procedures



PROCESS

### Recommendation 25 Development of a standalone custody manual

The QPS produce a standalone custody manual which provides a holistic reference point for the management and operation of watch-houses. A central custody manual will remove ambiguity regarding standards, compliance, and practices across watch-houses. Chapter 16 of the existing OPM is to be rewritten prior to inclusion in the custody manual, to remove outdated or superseded procedures. The manual will also stipulate training requirements, baseline local watch-house (station) instruction, watch-house functions and practices, and also include sections regarding granting bail, visitation, nutrition and other operating standards.



PROCESS

### Recommendation 26 Project management responsibilities

The QPS Transformation Office to provide project management and governance of watch-house reform program in collaboration with Senior Business Owners (SBOs).



PROCESS

### Recommendation 27 Enhanced awareness of complaints process

The QPS ensure all watch-house staff, prisoners and oversight bodies have clear visibility and awareness of the complaints handling process in watch-houses.



PROCESS

### Recommendation 28 Standardised watch-house visitation policy

The QPS to standardise the official watch-house visitor policy to ensure consistency across the state and explore the development of an online appointment system to facilitate equitable access and transparency of functions performed during visits.

The QPS to undertake comprehensive review of third-party service provider access to watch-houses with the objective of taking over the direct management of third-party service provider contracts, including setting of KPIs and service level agreements.



PROCESS

### Recommendation 29 Enhance the existing bail processes for children and adults

The QPS explore strategies to enhance bail processing options to minimise the use of watch-houses, supported by the development of a risk-based framework for bail and associated prescribed officer training.

## Digital modernisation

The Review identified that current information management processes in watch-houses are cumbersome (QPRIME on desktop computers), and highly manual (use of whiteboards, notebooks and sheets of paper). These are 'make do' systems and processes and are not specially designed for effective management of the watch-house environment. A more dynamic and modern digital platform that enables records to be made for every interaction, activity and prisoner movement would significantly enhance operational efficiency, accountability, and consistency.

### Custody management system

The QPS Mobile Capability Command has proposed new mobile digital systems and tools to enhance management of prisoners. Current fragmented Information and Communications Technology (ICT) solutions are considered ineffective, which creates inefficiencies and increases risks such as death or serious harm to persons in custody. Furthermore, outdated systems can contribute to failure to comply with legislative requirements and contribute to staff stress and burnout. Any failure in the watch-house creates a risk for decreased community confidence and reputational harm to the QPS.

One solution is to provide contemporary ICT systems for all officers involved in the custody management process, ensuring accurate and timely recording of all aspects of custody management. Enhanced visibility of custody information will improve decision-making and mitigate risks. The initiative would include enhancements to QPS Lite Information Technology Exchange (QLITE) NextGen, automated notifications to external agencies, a new Custody Profile view, capacity management features and a new Custody Management application for real-time recording of watch-house activities. These solutions will enhance officer safety, motivation, public safety, accountability, transparency, community confidence, and reduce workload for both frontline and watch-house staff.

Potential integrated information systems across agencies, such as with QH, can also assist in reducing data duplication, repetitive processes and administrative burdens. For instance, QH nurses at Brisbane Watch-house currently maintain three identical records, which is a significant duplication of effort. Implementing shared systems or data-sharing agreements could enable for example the QPS to share electronic custody records with QCS and DYJVS and allow healthcare professionals to complete health files digitally, streamlining the process to enhance overall efficiency.

The Review recommends the priority development of a custody application for use in watch-houses, and exploration of end-to-end data sharing with other agencies where possible.

### VideoLink technology

Deploying VideoLink technology in watch-houses can facilitate timely access to legal representation, court appearances, health and education services and visitors. Implementing this technology in the watch-house with appropriate soundproofing or sound reduction techniques can ensure privacy, reduce distractions and environmental noise. Expanding VideoLink capabilities would also alleviate the QPS burden of transporting prisoners to and from facilities.

Since the 1990s, Queensland's youth justice system, through the *Juvenile Justice Act 1992* and the *Audio Visual and Audio Links Amendment Act 1999*, has used VideoLink technology to facilitate remote court appearances. This has increased the number of remote hearings and reduced the need for physical transportation of children. Corrective Services in other jurisdictions have integrated VideoLink systems to improve timely access to legal professionals as well as improving access to health services and psychological professionals. For example, Corrective Services NSW uses VideoLink to deliver a range of health services, including consultations with specialists, mental health professionals, and ongoing psychological support.<sup>64</sup> This approach ensures prisoners receive necessary care while maintaining security and reducing the need for physical transportation to external health services facilities.

Currently, there is a statewide opportunity to improve the availability of VideoLink technology within watch-houses. This was also raised by a small number of survey respondents and District Officers who perceive the majority of QCS prisoner transportations from prisons to watch-houses for court were not necessary, and with increased uptake of VideoLink, transports could be significantly decreased. Increased utilisation of VideoLink

by the courts can significantly impact on resource intensive prisoner transportation, as well as better access to other services even in remote locations.

An internal QPS submission recommended working with other agencies to increase telehealth appointments for hospitals and psychologists, especially if health services are not available onsite. Although these systems were established during COVID-19, their use has declined post-pandemic, requiring police to mostly transport prisoners to health appointments or wait for extended periods at hospitals. While some watch-houses in Queensland, such as Caboolture, have successfully deployed VideoLink systems, there is a need for consistent and uniform statewide implementation, and discussions with other agencies including with Legal Aid, DOJ, QCS and DYJVS to ensure usage is increased.

## **Artificial intelligence**

The use of artificial intelligence (AI), predictive modelling and other advanced technologies can enhance prisoner management, demand management, information sharing and overall risk management. These technologies can efficiently process large volumes of data and identify trends that may not be apparent or processed efficiently through human intervention.

The NSW Silverwater Correctional Complex integrates AI technology to enhance prisoner monitoring. This includes advanced CCTV systems that track prisoner movements and detect unusual or suspicious behaviour or unauthorised access, allowing staff to intervene promptly.<sup>65</sup> Additionally, other Australian correctional services employ predictive analytics to improve risk management and resource allocation.<sup>66</sup> The benefits include assessing prisoner risks and needs, aiding data-driven decisions, enhancing officer safety and reducing the strain on understaffed facilities. Furthermore, security systems include the mass-monitoring of prisoner phone calls. This system uses speech recognition technology, semantic analysis and machine learning software to build extensive databases of searchable words that can flag suspicious calls. It can detect plans for crimes, contraband smuggling, escape planning, witness tampering and other incriminating activities.<sup>67</sup>

In Queensland, AI and health radars have been installed in select areas of the newly constructed Wacol Youth Remand Centre to monitor the health of prisoners. These systems use advanced algorithms to detect signs of distress or medical emergencies, ensuring timely intervention and care. This initiative aims to enhance the safety and wellbeing of prisoners, providing a more humane and responsive environment.

By integrating predictive modelling technology, watch-house operations can be streamlined, ensuring efficient resource allocation and enhancing the overall safety and effectiveness of watch-house management.

## **CCTV with biometrics and monitoring capabilities**

Several Australian correctional facilities have adopted digital systems to accurately monitor prisoner movements, health assessments and other critical information. Biometric security systems use unique physical or behavioural characteristics to identify and verify people's identities and track their movements and behaviours. In 2010, Corrective Services NSW received \$1.1 billion in infrastructure funding, allocating \$2.5 million to upgrade biometric security systems at NSW prisons.<sup>68</sup> Additionally, in 2022, the NSW Government signed a \$12.8 million contract to implement facial recognition biometric systems at 21 correctional centres, enhancing the speed and efficiency of the identification process.<sup>69</sup> The biometric system is projected to reduce operational expenditure by 12% and bring all facilities under one single point of truth.<sup>70</sup> These digital solutions provide instant updates, improve overall efficiency, reduce the need for manual intermediaries and minimise risks to officer safety, fostering a more secure and supportive environment.

An internal QPS submission recommended the use of digital or biometric identifiers to improve the intake and tracking of prisoners. This approach can enhance the management of individuals through the watch-house pathway, drawing lessons from agencies such as QH, which use text notifications for patient transitions. Robust identifiers, such as biometrics, can enhance the security of medication distribution, thereby preventing individuals from obtaining incorrect medication or fraudulently obtaining medication intended for others. Across all survey respondents, 5% were strongly supportive of improved technology solutions, particularly to address critical areas such as prisoner health services and monitoring.

## Recommendations relating to digital modernisation



PLACE

### Recommendation 30 Business case to modernise CCTV network

The QPS develop a business case to modernise the CCTV network in watch-houses, including a centralised monitoring function and leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) technology to aid prisoner management and reduce risk of adverse health incidents for prisoners.



PROCESS

### Recommendation 31 Increased VideoLink court appearances

The QPS engage with DOJ to modernise court processes and optimise timeliness of court appearances for prisoners in watch-house custody (including via VideoLink) to reduce the length of stay.



PROCESS

### Recommendation 32 End-to-end custody management tool

The QPS to develop an end-to-end custody information management business case for digital uplift in watch-houses to enhance the performance of operations and functions. This includes capability for information sharing, risk identification and management, and safe prisoner management.



PROCESS

### Recommendation 33 Development of a Mobile Custody Application

As a priority, the QPS to develop a Mobile Custody Application which allows watch-house officers to record, in real time, prisoner management activities, and watch-house operations, and deploy QLITE devices to all watch-house officers to operationalise.



PLACE

### Recommendation 34 Expanding support services to be delivered via VideoLink

As a priority, the QPS installs VideoLink technology in all watch-houses, to enable better access to health, education, support services, and court appearances.

## Conclusion

The QPS Watch-house Review was an important opportunity to look at watch-house custody processes, from intake to release, or transfer of prisoners. The Review observed the internal operating model of watch-houses statewide requires improvement to ensure prisoners are afforded adequate conditions for their health and safety, while also ensuring the safety of watch-house staff.

The Review recommends re-design of the operating model towards a centre-led approach to ensure strategies, standards, policies and procedures are developed and maintained centrally, while allowing districts control of the execution and daily management of watch-house functions in line with standard practices.

Much of the Review identified issues pertinent to the slippage of watch-houses becoming, over time, long-term custodial facilities. Re-aligning watch-houses with their intended purpose, that is short-term processing, would significantly alleviate pressures on the QPS and across the watch-house network, thereby releasing officers to the frontline.

Implementation oversight of these recommendations should be performed by the QPS Transformation Office, which have ability to work with relevant business units across the QPS as a high-priority project.

A whole-of-system approach is necessary to ensure demands across all custodial facilities are appropriately managed. This requires cross-agency collaboration to further explore options and deliver solutions, particularly in relation to legislative watch-house stay limits for sentenced or remanded prisoners, shared or outsourced prisoner transportation models, and appropriate and consistent medical assessments and the delivery of appropriate support services.

# Endnotes

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- <sup>1</sup> *Human Rights Act 2019* (Qld), s 30 and *Criminal Code Act 1899* (Qld) s 285 ('Criminal Code').
- <sup>2</sup> Queensland Ombudsman, *Prison overcrowding and other matters report* (Report, February 2024).
- <sup>3</sup> Community Services Industry (Portable Long Service Leave) Bill 2019 (Qld).
- <sup>4</sup> Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 (Qld).
- <sup>5</sup> QPUE, *QPUE 2024 Assessment Review of QPS Watch House Safety and Practices*, (Review, 2024) ('QPUE 2024 Review').
- <sup>6</sup> Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce ('WSJT'), *Hear Her Voice – Report 2 - Women and girls' experiences across the criminal justice system examines and reviews the experiences of women and girls across Queensland's criminal justice system* (Report, July 2022) ('WSJT Hear her Voice Report 2').
- <sup>7</sup> Land Court of Queensland, *Protocol for First Nations Evidence in the Land Court*, (Protocol, 1 July 2024).
- <sup>8</sup> Queensland Ombudsman, *Cairns and Murgon Watch-houses Inspection Report: Focus on detention of children*, (Report, 11 September 2024) ('Cairns and Murgon Watch-houses Inspection Report 2024').
- <sup>9</sup> Queensland Police Service State Custody and Property Group, 'RFI 1/2024', 2024.
- <sup>10</sup> Queensland Police Service State Custody and Property Group, 'RFI 1/2024', 2024.
- <sup>11</sup> This number is likely an underestimation due to inconsistent data entry for transport hours into Local Computer Aided Dispatch ('LCAD').
- <sup>12</sup> Data based on LCAD code 606 from 01/01/2024 to 31/12/2024; Data based on LCAD code 703 from 01/01/2024 to 31/12/2024. The data refers to hours by vehicle, so these numbers were doubled to account for two police officers per vehicle. Inconsistency in reporting is noted as a limitation of the data.
- <sup>13</sup> Figure calculated by the 2024-25 Financial Year QPS Estimated Costing Summary for a Senior Constable (\$189.99 overtime hourly rate) to determine an upper limit. Due to this calculation, coupled with inconsistent data input, this figure is likely an underestimation of true costs.
- <sup>14</sup> In Western Australia ('WA'), Ventia Australia is contracted to provide Court Security and Custodial Services and conduct most transports of persons in custody, with the Department of Justice and WA Police conducting transport in some circumstances. In Victoria, Corrections Victoria and Victoria Police have a contract with G4S to provide prisoner transport services, including police prisoners. In South Australia, the Department of Correctional Services has a contract with Ventia Australia for the transportation of prisoners between prisons, courts, police stations and health services and in-court management services. In the Northern Territory ('NT'), the Department of Corrections entered into a contract with G4S in March 2025 to provide court custody and escort duties in Darwin, with the intention of providing prisoner transfers and increasing the jurisdiction of service delivery in future. In the interim, the NT Police Force and the Department of Corrections share prisoner transfer responsibilities across the territory. In New South Wales ('NSW'), Corrective Services NSW are primarily responsible for prisoner transport. In February 2025, NSW announced a six-month data analysis to measure the impact of prisoner transport on police staffing and resources.
- <sup>15</sup> Coroners Court of Queensland, 'Inquest into the death of Shiralee Deanne Tilberoo and Vlasta Wylucki' (18 June 2024) ('*Tilberoo and Wylucki Inquest*').
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>17</sup> *Cairns and Murgon Watch-houses Inspection Report 2024* (n 8).
- <sup>18</sup> Work Health and Safety (Psychosocial Risks) Amendment Regulation 2022 (Qld).
- <sup>19</sup> Workplace Health and Safety Queensland, 'Managing the risk of psychosocial hazards at work: Code of Practice', 2022.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>21</sup> *QPUE 2024 Review* (n 5).
- <sup>22</sup> *QPUE 2024 Review* (n 5).
- <sup>23</sup> Health, Safety and Wellbeing Statistical Report.
- <sup>24</sup> Queensland Police Service, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Division
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>26</sup> Health, Safety and Wellbeing QPS Injury Data 2019-2024.
- <sup>27</sup> ESC Strategic Insight Review (B-03-24).
- <sup>28</sup> *QPUE 2024 Review* (n 5).
- <sup>29</sup> Julia Crilly et al, 'Health Care in Police Watch-houses: A Challenge and an Opportunity' (2022) 217(6) *Medical Journal of Australia* 287-289.
- <sup>30</sup> Manon Ceelan et al, 'Health-care issues and health-care use among detainees in police custody' (2012) 19(6) *Journal of Forensic and Legal Medicine* 324-331.
- <sup>31</sup> *Cairns and Murgon Watch-houses Inspection Report 2024* (n 8).
- <sup>32</sup> *Tilberoo and Wylucki Inquest* (n 15).
- <sup>33</sup> Land Court of Queensland, *Protocol for First Nations Evidence in the Land Court*, (Protocol, 1 July 2024).
- <sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>35</sup> Explanatory Notes, Medicines and Poisons (Medicines) Regulation 2021 (Qld).
- <sup>36</sup> Submission from Brisbane City Watch-house to the Watch-house Review Team (Watch-house Review Team, 10 February 2025).
- <sup>37</sup> *WSJT Hear her Voice Report 2* (n 7).
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>39</sup> Australian Human Rights Commission. (n.d.); Sisters Inside submission.
- <sup>40</sup> Submission from Sisters Inside to the Watch-house Review Team (10 December 2024).

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- <sup>41</sup> Cairns and Murgon Watch-houses Inspection Report 2024 (n 8).
- <sup>42</sup> Carly Dierkhising et al, 'Trauma histories among justice-involved youth: findings from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network' (2013) 4(1) *European Journal of Psychotraumatology* 20274-20287.
- <sup>43</sup> Cairns and Murgon Watch-houses Inspection Report 2024 (n 8).
- <sup>44</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>45</sup> *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, opened for signature 20 November 1989, 1577 UNTS 3 (entered into force 2 September 1990).
- <sup>46</sup> Australian Children's Commissioners and Guardians, *A model charter of rights for children and children detained in youth justice facilities*.
- <sup>47</sup> *OPM Issue 105.2* (n 16) ch 16.17.5.
- <sup>48</sup> Caboolture Watch-house Education Support Hub (2024) Key statistics for the month of December 2024.
- <sup>49</sup> Caboolture Watch-house Education Support Hub (2024) Key statistics for the month of January 2025.
- <sup>50</sup> *OPM Issue 105.2* (n 16) ch 16.9.5.
- <sup>51</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>52</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>53</sup> *Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody* (Final Report, 15 April 1991).
- <sup>54</sup> QPS State Custody Unit, 'Custodial Process- Cell Visitors Scheme map. V1.0, 2024.
- <sup>55</sup> Murri Watch, 'Cell Visitor Service', *Services* (Web Page 2025) < <https://murriwatch.org.au/posts/1945/cell-visitor-service>>.
- <sup>56</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>57</sup> As noted in multiple submissions from external agencies and comments from internal QPS members.
- <sup>58</sup> *Youth Justice Act 1992* (Qld), s 48; s 48AAA(2).
- <sup>59</sup> Ibid, s 51(2).
- <sup>60</sup> *OPM Issue 105.2* (n 16) ch 5.10.1.
- <sup>61</sup> *Bail Act 1980* (Qld), s 16(1).
- <sup>62</sup> Ibid, s16(2).
- <sup>63</sup> Ibid, s 16(3).
- <sup>64</sup> Department of Communities and Justice (NSW), 'Video conferencing for professionals', *Private Legal and Medical Professional self-service bookings for telephone, video, and in-person visits* (Web Page 1 July 2025) <<https://correctiveservices.dcj.nsw.gov.au/contact-and-visit-inmates/video-conferencing-for-professionals.html>>.
- <sup>65</sup> 9News, 'Sydney's Silverwater prison expanded with new technology to watch prisoners', (online, 30 April 2021) <<https://www.9news.com.au/national/silverwater-jail-inside-new-block-artificial-intelligence-sydney-nsw/37e7152b-f6dd-4ad8-bf53-2b1ece3f5dbf>>.
- <sup>66</sup> InmateAid, 'Information', *Transforming Corrections: How AI and emerging technologies revolutionize security and rehabilitation* (Web Page, 19 November 2024) <<https://www.inmateaid.com/information/transforming-corrections-how-ai-and-emerging-technologies-revolutionize-security-and-rehabilitation>>.
- <sup>67</sup> Rick Sarre, R. & Living, B, *Artificial Intelligence and the Administration of Criminal Justice: Predictive Policing and Predictive Justice* (Report, May 2023).
- <sup>68</sup> Brett Winterford, 'NSW Police and prisons get IT budget boost', *IT News* (online, 9 June 2010) < <https://www.itnews.com.au/news/nsw-police-and-prisons-get-it-budget-boost-214443>>.
- <sup>69</sup> Justin Hendry, 'NSW deploys facial recognition system into prisons', *InnovationAus* (online, 5 September 2022) < <https://www.innovationaus.com/nsw-deploys-facial-recognition-system-into-prisons/>>.
- <sup>70</sup> Ibid.



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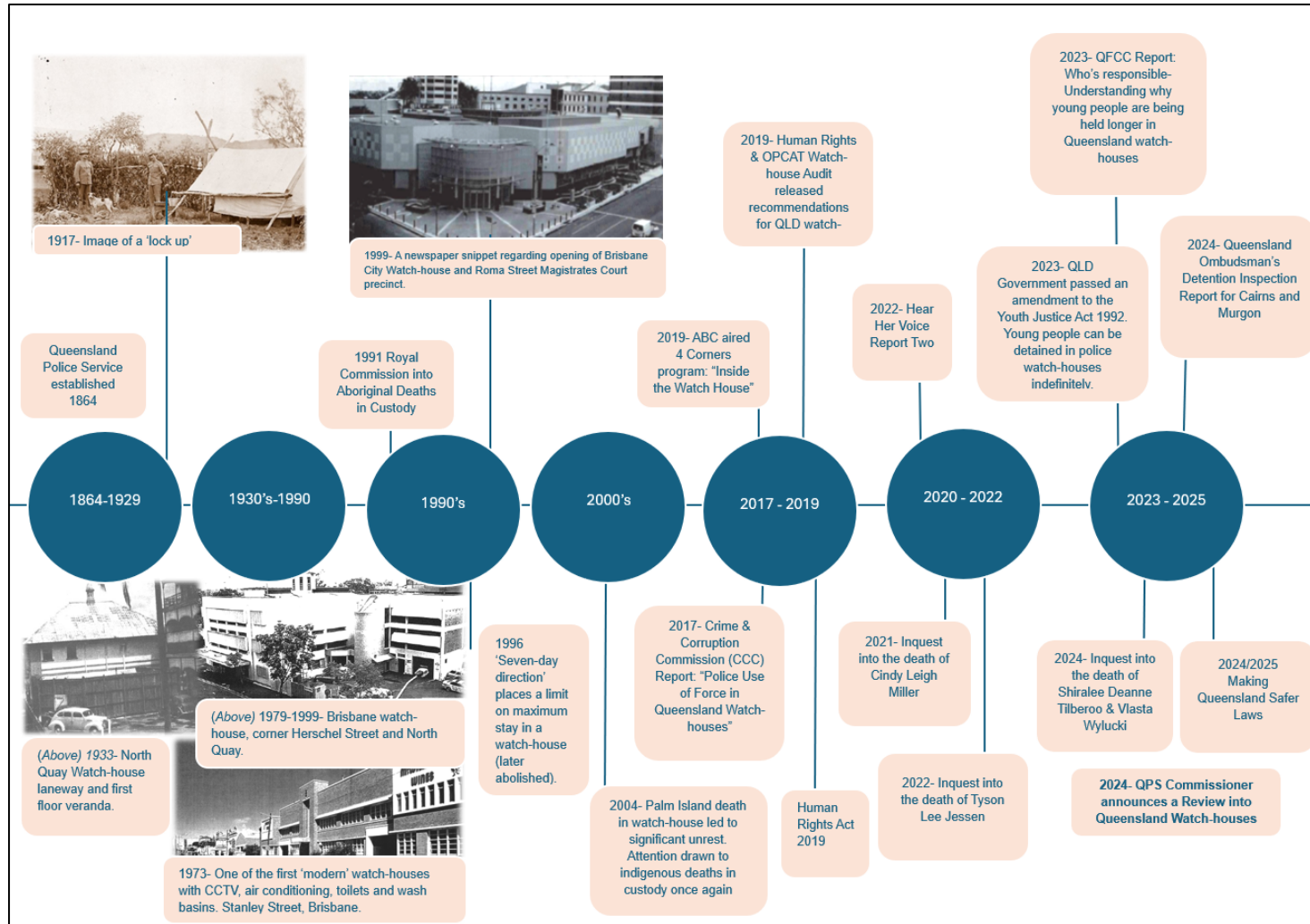
QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE

# Watch-house Review Annexures



# Annexures

## Annexure 1 – Timeline of significant reviews and coronial inquests



## Annexure 2 – Terms of Reference

The Commissioner of Police announced a Watch-house Review (the Review) into how the QPS designs, provisions and operates watch-houses to ensure they are safe and well-managed for people in custody, staff and visitors.

The Review will undertake discovery work across several key areas. Priority will be given to those areas that will achieve the best outcome for people in custody and watch-house personnel, to ensure the custodial activities are managed appropriately.

The review has been split into three main themes:

1. People:
  - a. Ensuring our people are appropriately recruited and trained to care for persons in custody in watch-houses.
  - b. Ensuring the health and safety of persons in custody.
  - c. Ensuring the health and safety of our people working in watch-houses.
2. Processes:
  - a. Ensuring our systems and processes are efficient and effective for watchhouse custody operations.
3. Places:
  - a. Examination of our infrastructure and facilities (including technology) to identify opportunities for improvements in the support of our people and processes.

Health and safety matters relating to the above three themes will also inform the review.









There is scope for the Review to include other relevant matters that arise during the review.

Out of scope for the Review includes:

- Policies of Queensland Corrective Services (QCS) and the Department of Youth Justice and Victim Support (DYJVS) that impact the operations of the QPS
- The guarding of detainees in hospitals and medical centres
- Court orderly duties (Proper Officer) and associated movements under section 307-309 of the *Corrective Services Act 2006* (CS Act); and
- Court cells (s 310 CS Act).

## Annexure 3 – Summary of recommendations

### Recommendations relating to watch-house infrastructure

 PLACE	<b>Recommendation 1 Business case for capital works for watch-house facilities</b>
	The QPS develop business cases for watch-house options including capital works.
 PLACE	<b>Recommendation 2 Reclassification of watch-houses</b>
	The QPS reclassify current watch-houses, based on facility purpose, locality, structure and operational capabilities. Categorisation is to be informed by WHS assessments and relative controls that can be implemented to reduce overall risk.
 PLACE	<b>Recommendation 3 Watch-house remediation plan</b>
	The QPS immediately commence a program of watch-house remediation works to address identified safety issues and privacy concerns (particularly for women and girls), as funding permits.
 PLACE	<b>Recommendation 4 Body scanner trial</b>
	The QPS implement a body scanner trial in a large/super watch-house to enhance the safety of staff and prisoners and reduce the need for invasive unclothed searches. An outcome evaluation should be conducted following the trial to consider the potential for further implementation.
 PLACE	<b>Recommendation 5 Watch-house infrastructure improvement plan</b>
	The QPS update the Building Standards Manual (BSM) to reflect minimum standards for watch-houses, including the reclassification of some watch-houses. Ensure standards reflect findings from Coroners, Ombudsman, Human Rights, and WHS assessment recommendations and undertake inspections to ascertain level of alignment of standards in facilities. Use inspection findings to develop a forward capital assets plan for QPS.
 PLACE	<b>Recommendation 6 Develop QBuild list of preferred contractors</b>
	The QPS engage with QBuild to develop a list of preferred contractors across the state to ensure the provision of maintenance and remediation works are conducted to the requisite building standards, with the ability to deliver a standard of works that meets the unique requirements of custodial facilities.
 PROCESS	<b>Recommendation 7 Addressing privacy concerns and segregation of persons in custody</b>
	The QPS enhance segregation from male prisoners and privacy for women and girls, by the designation of locations and/or cells for these cohorts.  Work in partnership with DYJVS and QCS to implement strategies that prioritise movement of remanded, particularly girls, and women from watch-house environments (WSJT 2 recommendations 105 and 106).
 PROCESS	<b>Recommendation 8 Baseline all in-cell services (including as meals, clothing, cleaning and laundry)</b>
	The SCU baseline all watch-house functions including meals, clothing, cleaning and laundry and centralise all procurement and contract management across the state to implement minimum standards and generate fiscal efficiencies. SCU to seek specialist advice on nutritional standards and guidelines for food provision in watch-houses, which guide procurement of appropriate catering contracts that meet minimum standards.

## Recommendations relating to prisoner transportation



PROCESS

### Recommendation 9 Length of stay in watch-houses

The QPS to prepare a policy position for Government to consider a maximum length of prisoner stay in watch-houses and holding cells relative to the classification of the facility (see re-designation of watch-houses in recommendation two). A 72 hour maximum length of stay is consistent with Coronial recommendations (Tilberoo and Wylucki Inquest), and prioritising safety and expedient transfer of women and girls (Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce (WSJT) Report 2 recommendations 105 and 106).



PROCESS

### Recommendation 10 Establish a whole-of-system prisoner transport model

The QPS to collaborate with other criminal justice agencies to develop a joint whole-of-government business case regarding options for a future prisoner transport model, and performance of hospital guard duties. To support the business case, a consistent and centralised data collection system is required to accurately measure the nature and extent of prisoner transports and hospital guards across the state.

## Recommendations relating to building the workforce



PEOPLE

### Recommendation 11 Enhancing recruitment strategies

The SCU to lead enhancement of the recruitment model for watch-house staff (both sworn and civilian), to increase identified First Nations positions and tailor recruitment requirements to boost applicant pools. A dedicated working group, comprising SCU and the PCAP, is to be established to address this.



PEOPLE

### Recommendation 12 Revised training program and onboarding of watch-house staff

PCAP to lead curriculum development in collaboration with SCU to overhaul the training model for watch-house staff (both sworn and civilian), to elevate professionalism of watch-house operations (e.g. increase scenario skills, tactical communication, behaviour management, caring for vulnerable groups, and cultural sensitivity). All revisions to training to be evaluated within 12 months of implementation.



PEOPLE

### Recommendation 13 Develop and implement training, culture and professional development

The QPS to prioritise development and implementation of training and professional development to influence culture for Watch-house OICs, and ensure compliance prior to undertaking OIC roles, including short-term relieving.



PEOPLE

### Recommendation 14 Mandate OLP compliance

The QPS to mandate the completion of OLPs by all staff working in watch-houses, prior to undertaking any watch-house duties. This includes OIC training and professional development. SCU is to monitor and enforce watch-house officers' compliance with mandatory training.



PEOPLE

### Recommendation 15 Develop mandatory 6-month mentoring package for Assistance Watch-house Officers

The QPS to develop a mandatory six-month mentoring package for AWOs by adopting a similar model to the long established First Year Constable program.



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### **Recommendation 16 Community of best practice**

The SCU establish a quarterly forum with watch-house OICs to develop best practice principles to maintain professionalism and integrity within watch-houses and implement the principles across the network.



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### **Recommendation 17 Develop a baseline rostering model**

The QPS to continue to develop a consistent resourcing and rostering model for the effective management of watch-houses regardless of their capacity or location. As a priority, commence a trial of a new demand rostering model for at least three months in two large/super facilities with different layouts (i.e., pod and linear), which considers demand, overtime, staffing ratios, and higher demand prisoners. The outcomes of the trials are to be reported to the Strategic Custody Committee.



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### **Recommendation 18 State Custody Unit operating model uplift**

The QPS uplift SCU capability through the creation of specific functions to drive consistency, efficiency, professionalism, and compliance with standards statewide. Functions include SCU to baseline and maintain all relevant information regarding all areas of watch-house operations.



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### **Recommendation 19 Transfer ownership of watch-houses to SCU**

The QPS to transfer policy, training and professional development as well as auditing functions to SCU. The operational management and day to day running of watch-house is maintained by the Districts.



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### **Recommendation 20 Risk mitigation to implement WHS controls**

The QPS to undertake intensive risk mitigation activities to implement WHS controls in watch-houses.



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### **Recommendation 21 Psychosocial risk audits in watch-houses**

The QPS Safety Strategy Division in collaboration with SCU to prioritise psychosocial risk audits of watch-houses and develop action plans for implementation of control measures in workplaces.

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## **Recommendations relating to support services**



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### **Recommendation 22 Co-designed delivery of health services to persons in custody**

The QPS to partner with Queensland Health (QH) to further expand the delivery of co-designed health services (including mental health and medication dispensing and administering), for all watch-houses including utilising VideoLink technology.



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### **Recommendation 23 Review of intake assessment tools**

The QPS, in partnership with QH, DYJVS and QCS, develop and implement an appropriate initial intake assessment tool tailored for processing children and adults (including First Nations people) into a watch-house

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PROCESS

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### **Recommendation 24 Delivery of education services for children in watch-houses**

The QPS partner with DoE to further expand the delivery of co-designed education services for children in watch-houses, including utilising VideoLink technology.

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## **Recommendations relating to policies and procedures**



PROCESS

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### **Recommendation 25 Development of a standalone custody manual**

The QPS produce a standalone custody manual which provides a holistic reference point for the management and operation of watch-houses. A central custody manual will remove ambiguity regarding standards, compliance, and practices across watch-houses. Chapter 16 of the existing Operational Procedures Manual (OPMs) is to be rewritten prior to inclusion in the custody manual, to remove outdated or superseded procedures. The manual will also stipulate training requirements, baseline local watch-house (station) instruction, watch-house functions and practices, and also include sections regarding granting bail, visitation, nutrition and other operating standards.

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PROCESS

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### **Recommendation 26 Project management responsibilities**

The QPS Transformation Office to provide project management and governance of watch-house reform program in collaboration with Senior Business Owners (SBOs).

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PROCESS

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### **Recommendation 27 Enhanced awareness of complaints process**

The QPS ensure all watch-house staff, prisoners and oversight bodies have clear visibility and awareness of the complaints handling process in watch-houses.

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PROCESS

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### **Recommendation 28 Standardised watch-house visitation policy**

The QPS to standardise the official watch-house visitor policy to ensure consistency across the state and explore the development of an online appointment system to facilitate equitable access and transparency of functions performed during visits.

The QPS to undertake comprehensive review of third-party service provider access to watch-houses with the objective of taking over the direct management of third-party service provider contracts, including setting of KPIs and service level agreements.

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PROCESS

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### **Recommendation 29 Enhance the existing bail processes for children and adults**

The QPS explore strategies to enhance bail processing options to minimise the use of watch-houses, supported by the development of a risk-based framework for bail and associated prescribed officer training.

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## **Recommendations relating to digital modernisation**



PLACE

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### **Recommendation 30 Business case to modernise CCTV network**

The QPS develop a business case to modernise the CCTV network in watch-houses, including a centralised monitoring function and leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) technology to aid prisoner management and reduce risk of adverse health incidents for prisoners.

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PROCESS

### **Recommendation 31 Increased VideoLink court appearances**

The QPS engage with DOJ to modernise court processes and optimise timeliness of court appearances for prisoners in watch-house custody (including via VideoLink) to reduce the length of stay.



PROCESS

### **Recommendation 32 End-to-end custody management tool**

The QPS to develop an end-to-end custody information management business case for digital uplift in watch-houses to enhance the performance of operations and functions. This includes capability for information sharing, risk identification and management, and safe prisoner management.



PROCESS

### **Recommendation 33 Development of a Mobile Custody Application**

As a priority, the QPS to develop a Mobile Custody Application which allows watch-house officers to record, in real time, prisoner management activities, and watch-house operations, and deploy QPS Lite Information Technology Exchange (QLiTE) devices to all watch-house officers to operationalise.



PLACE

### **Recommendation 34 Expanding support services to be delivered via VideoLink**

As a priority, the QPS installs VideoLink technology in all watch-houses, to enable better access to health, education, support services, and court appearances.

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## Annexure 4 – Existing Assistant Watch-house Officer training curriculum and proposed additions

Table 1: Curriculum topics and proposed additions

Current Curriculum	Proposed Additions to Curriculum
<p>Introduction to QPS &amp; the Watch-house Officer role</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding QPS Abbreviations</li> <li>• Roles &amp; Responsibilities</li> <li>• Corporate Induction</li> </ul>	
<p>Ethics, Information Privacy and Security</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building Strong Foundations – Integrity First</li> <li>• QPS Building an Ethical Culture</li> <li>• Accessing QPS Information</li> <li>• Right to Information</li> <li>• Public Interest Disclosure</li> <li>• Declarable Associations</li> <li>• Cyber Security</li> <li>• Social Media</li> <li>• QPS Protective Security Awareness</li> </ul>	
<p>Legislation, Policy, Procedures relevant to WO role and custody management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prescribed Officers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transports and Powers whilst on transport</li> <li>• Prisoner Escorts, movements, prisoner release and transfer</li> </ul>
<p>Communication Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• De-escalation</li> <li>• Use of Force &amp; Communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2-day de-escalation course delivered by SMEs</li> </ul>
<p>Decision-making, Situational Use of Force (SUOF) options for WO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Threat Assessment</li> <li>• Leg Irons</li> <li>• EMD (Electronic Monitoring Device)</li> <li>• Body Belt</li> <li>• Violent Detention Cells</li> <li>• Handheld Metal Detectors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WIN (What's Important Now)</li> <li>• COPS (Consider Options, Practice Safety)</li> <li>• POP (Person, Object, Place)</li> <li>• EMD – practical component (Adult)</li> <li>• EMD – theory and practical (Children)</li> </ul>
<p>Operational Skills and Tactics (OST)-practical skills in the WH environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tactical First Aid</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum two (2) weeks of OST with additional time allocated for Dynamic Interactive Scenarios</li> </ul>
<p>Wellbeing of Self and Persons in Custody</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cell Visitor Scheme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dealing with Difficult people in custody</li> <li>• Management of alcohol and drug affected persons in custody</li> </ul>

Current Curriculum	Proposed Additions to Curriculum
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Custody Care and Management</li> <li>• Do Food Safely</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Person centred care</li> </ul>
Prisoner Segregation/ Classifications	
<p>Risk Assessment &amp; Health Assessments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duty of Care</li> <li>• Mental Health</li> <li>• Responding to Mental Illness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical</li> <li>• Diabetes</li> <li>• Asthma</li> <li>• Drug/ Alcohol Dependency and Withdrawal</li> <li>• Mental Health</li> <li>• Anxiety, Depression</li> <li>• Dispensing Medications</li> <li>• Assessing Children</li> <li>• Assessing First Nations Persons</li> <li>• <i>Disability</i></li> <li>• <i>Cognitive Impairment &amp; Literacy Challenges</i></li> </ul>
<p>Workplace Health and Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evacuation</li> <li>• Fatigue Management</li> <li>• Psychological First Aid Foundations</li> <li>• Psychological Health and Fitness</li> <li>• Asbestos Awareness</li> <li>• Psychological First Aid for Leaders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recording Hazards on the Hazard reporting management system</li> <li>• Recording work related injuries Incident/injury notification and reporting system IINRS</li> </ul>
<p>The WH Custody Management Process – Receive, Process, Searching, Property</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Processing Prisoners</li> <li>• Supervision of Prisoner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Court processes and outcomes</li> <li>• Searching: Prisoner Property</li> <li>• Searches – Risk Identification and Management</li> </ul>
<p>Security, Monitoring and QPRIME</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• QPRIME Fundamentals</li> <li>• Body Worn Camera</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of BWC footage of WHs and WH operations and events</li> <li>• BWC Practical Exercise and AXON upload</li> </ul>
<p>Cell Inspections: Types, Timings, Frequency</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Security and Monitoring</li> <li>• Cell inspections and Care Plans</li> <li>• Person Care Plan and Levels</li> </ul>
<p>Human Rights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental Health</li> <li>• Watch-house Human Rights</li> <li>• Gender Safeguards for Search of Persons</li> </ul>	
Cultural Capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural Awareness</li> <li>• Bias</li> </ul> <p>First Nations Specific</p>

Current Curriculum	Proposed Additions to Curriculum
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural Safety and Capability</li> <li>• Murri-Watch</li> <li>• Cultural Competency</li> </ul>
	<p>Custody and Wellbeing of Children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child trauma &amp; Child Mental Health</li> <li>• Managing Young Persons in custody</li> <li>• Behaviour Management</li> <li>• Communicating with children with complex needs</li> <li>• Strategies to engage with children</li> <li>• Child brain development</li> <li>• Disability in young persons</li> <li>• Cognitive impairments and Literacy challenges in children</li> </ul>
<p>Systems Livescan LCAD (Local Computer Aided Dispatch) ITAS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Livescan Practical Assessment and Qualification</li> </ul>
<p>DNA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collection</li> <li>• Sample</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DNA Practical Assessment and Qualification</li> </ul>
<p>Vulnerable Persons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domestic &amp; Family Violence – Recognise, Respond, Refer</li> <li>• Coercive Control</li> <li>• Unconscious Bias</li> <li>• Volatile Substance Misuse</li> <li>• Lesbian, Gay &amp; Bisexual Awareness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vulnerable Persons in Custody</li> <li>• Deaths in Custody</li> <li>• Trauma – How it presents, a Trauma informed approach in custody</li> <li>• <i>Women &amp; Girls</i></li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dynamic Interactive Scenarios</li> <li>• QPRIME Practical Exercises</li> <li>• Compulsory Mentoring Period (Min 6 months) with Structured Practical Assessments</li> </ul>

## Annexure 5 – Health services, medical equipment and prisoner mental health

Table 2: Health services availability across 20 of the busiest watch-houses, February 2025.

Watch-house	Health service availability	Percentage of prisoners admitted during health service hours
Beenleigh	0900-1700 across 7 days	53
Brisbane City	0700-2100 (2 x shifts) across 7 days	72
Bundaberg	Nil	0
Caboolture (Youth Hub)	24 hours 7 days	100
Cairns	1500-1900 (approx. 4 hours) 7 days	24
Caloundra	On call - 7 days (day shift also Maroochydore)	Data not available
Cleveland	Nil	0
Gladstone	Nil	0
Ipswich	2 hours (various timing) 7 days	9 (approx.)
Mackay	Nil	Data not available
Maroochydore	On call 7 days (day shift also covers Caloundra)	Data not available
Maryborough	Nil	0
Mt Isa	2 hours (various timing) 7 days	Data not available
Pine Rivers	2 hours (various timing) 7 days	9 (approx.)
Redcliffe	Nil	0
Richlands	0900-1100 (approx. 2 hours) 7 days	26
Rockhampton	Nil	Data not available
Southport	0900-1700 7 days	48
Toowoomba	Once a day 7 days	Data not available
Townsville	0700-1700 7 days	57

Source: OIC survey February 2025.

Table 3: Breakdown of medical equipment located at selected QPS Watch-houses

Watch-house	Medical Equipment Available
Beenleigh	Yes - basic first aid kit
Brisbane City	Yes - defibrillator, oxygen machine, observation machine, basic first aid kit
Bundaberg	Yes – basic first aid, defibrillator, CPR mask
Caboolture (Youth Hub)	Yes - oxygen response kit, trauma response, iv cannulation, defibrillator, resuscitation mask, blood glucose meter, basic first aid kit
Cairns	Yes - basic first aid kit and defibrillator
Caloundra	Yes – basic first aid kit
Cleveland	Yes - basic first aid kit and defibrillator
Gladstone	Yes - basic first aid kit
Ipswich	Yes - basic first aid kit
Mackay	Yes - basic first aid kit, defibrillator, resuscitation mask, blood glucose meter
Maroochydore	Yes - basic first aid kit
Maryborough	Yes - basic first aid kit, defibrillator, silicone resuscitator, blood glucose meter
Mt Isa	Yes - first aid kit, INR machine, ECG Machine, glucometer, blood pressure machine, otoscope, stethoscope
Pine Rivers	Yes - basic first aid kit, blood pressure monitor, defibrillator
Redcliffe	Yes - basic first aid kit, blood glucose meter, defibrillator, resuscitation mask for CPR
Richlands	Yes - basic first aid kit, temperature monitor with o2 sensor, blood pressure monitor
Rockhampton	Yes – basic first aid kit, defibrillator, resuscitation equipment
Southport	Yes - basic first aid kit, blood glucose meter, blood pressure monitor, oxygen bottles
Toowoomba	Yes - basic first aid kit and observation equipment
Townsville	Yes - basic first aid kit, defibrillator, blood pressure monitor

*Table 4: Percentage of prisoners in watch-houses with police interaction generated mental health and suicidal caution flags, QPRIME (1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024)*

<b>Watch-house</b>	<b>% Mental Health Caution</b>	<b>% Suicidal Caution</b>
Brisbane City	30	11
Beenleigh	30	17
Bundaberg	24	10
Caboolture	24	11
Cairns	19	11
Caloundra	25	13
Cleveland	25	12
Gladstone	31	12
Ipswich	24	13
Mackay	29	13
Maroochydore	21	9
Maryborough	32	16
Mt Isa	28	18
Pine Rivers	26	13
Redcliffe	30	10
Richlands	22	12
Rockhampton	29	14
Southport	29	10
Toowoomba	24	19
Townsville	25	12
<b>QLD State total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>13</b>



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